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BOOKS BY RING W. LARDNER

THE LOVE NEST AND OTHER STORIES
WHAT OF IT?
HOW TO WRITE SHORT STORIES
GULLIBLE'S TRAVELS
YOU KNOW ME AL
THE BIG TOWN

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

THE LOVE NEST
AND OTHER STORIES

THE LOVE NEST AND OTHER STORIES

BY

RING W. LARDNER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

SARAH E. SPOOLDRIPPER

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

MCMXXVI

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INTRODUCTION

BY SARAH E. SPOOLDRIPPER *

It is hoped that a careful reading of the stories collected in this book will dispel the general illusion that in his later years Ring Lardner was just a tiresome old man induced by financial calamity and a fondness for narcotics to harp constantly on the futility of life on a branch line of the Long Island Railroad. In these tales we see the old fellow as perhaps not lovable, but certainly irresistible. There was an impishness in him that fascinated. It was part of his charm.

I know it for truth that from fifty on he indulged to an alarming extent in the lesser opiates, eating aspirin as if it were so much mud and seldom laying aside the all-day sucker which he plopped into his mouth the instant he had finished his breakfast. Lardner always bolted his food. He was afraid

* Miss Spooldripper lived with the Lardners for years and took care of their wolf. She knew all there was to know about Lardner, and her mind was virtually blank. It was part of her charm.

the rats would get it. It was part of his charm.

Appearance of "The Love Nest," the short story from which the book takes its name, in Cosmopolitan Magazine, created a furore on the east bank of the Hudson, commuters of that neighborhood nearly coming to blows in arguments over the identity, in real life, of the tale's principal characters. Two old cronies who had played halma together night after night for nearly a week suddenly began making faces at one another, hiding each other's gloves, pinching each other's forearms, and altogether making a fiasco of the entire relationship. The author heard rumors of this feud and others and knew their cause, but kept his own counsel till the last day of his earthly career, when he confided to me that the Lou Gregg of the story was President Fillmore and the Mrs. Gregg, Mary Lewis.

It was in the middle of this work that the rivalry between Lardner, Scott Fitzgerald, and Opie Reade for the love of Lily Langtry reached its height. During a dinner party at which the then raging beauty and her raging

suitors were all present, the toastmaster, Gerald Chapman, asked Miss Langtry to rise and drink to "her favorite." The muscles of Fitzgerald and Reade were taut; Lardner's were very flabby.

After a pause that seemed to endure all night but really lasted only half that long, Miss Langtry got up, raised her glass and said: "I drink to Red Grange. Heston may have been his superior on defense and Coy, Thorpe, Eckersall, and Mahan more versatile, but as a common carrier I take off my hat to the Wheaton icemonger."

Miss Langtry was deeply interested in college athletics and it was she who christened a certain New Jersey town Rahway because it was en route to Rutgers, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Her response to the toastmaster's request affected her three swains variously. Reade arose and told the story of the two half-breeds, Seminole and Deminole. Lardner and Fitzgerald took up rotation pool, and weighed themselves once a week. Every so often they became maudlin, or, better still, inaudible.

Introduction

An insight into Lardner's true character may be obtained from the correspondence which passed between him and Mrs. Patrick Campbell while he was writing the story "Haircut" at Atlantic City.

"Dear Ringlets," wrote Mrs. Campbell (it was a name she had for him), "don't forget 'Miss England' while playing around with 'Miss America.'"

"Dear Pat," was Lardner's reply, "am having a 'swill' time, but I do 'Miss England' and indeed I would walk a mile for a Campbell."

On the back of the card was a picture of Young's Million Dollar Pier.*

"Haircut" was written under a severe strain, the writer having just engaged in a violent quarrel with John N. Wheeler, then editor of Liberty.

"Why didn't you lead me a spade?" demanded Wheeler.

"I was out of them," was the infuriating

* This correspondence and other mash notes written by Lardner and his admirers were obtained from the street cleaners of East Shore Road, Great Neck, where the author threw all his mail, and are printed with the permission of Judge Landis.

reply, and in a moment the two were rolling on the floor, with Wheeler's dice.

The character of the doctor in "Haircut" was a composite "photograph" of Mrs. Campbell and the Shuberts. It was Lardner's favorite among all his fictional characters, or, as he called them, "my puppets."

"Which is your favorite among all your 'puppets'?" I once asked him as we jointly gave the wolf a sitzbath.

"The doctor," he said.

The wolf was really the chief interest in Lardner's life. I have never elsewhere seen such a whole-souled comradeship as existed between the Master and this sinister pet. He was always hoping it would have a baby which he would have christened the Wolverine as a memorial to his native state.

Lardner's adoption of the beast was characteristic of the man. One afternoon in October while Mrs. Lardner (he always called her Junior as she was two or more years younger than he) was making out the May checks, she suddenly looked up from her work, sobbing, and said:

"Husband!"

"Yes, Junior. What is it?"

"I am overdrawn."

"You stay indoors and brood too much," replied Lardner. "A little exercise and a few pleasures would restore the bloom to both those cheeks."

"I am not referring to anything physical," said the little woman. "I mean there is less than no money in the bank."

At that moment there was a scratching outside that could not have been the children, as they had all had their baths.

"What is that noise, Junior?" inquired the Master.

"I will go and see," said the Madam, sliding headforemost to the front door, as she was a great admirer of Frankie Frisch.

She returned in a moment, sobbing louder than ever, with the news that the wolf was at the door.

This was the beginning of a friendship that the less said about it the better. But I suppose I ought not to complain, for the wolf's advent into the home was responsible for

mine. and it is not every spinster who spends the latter days of her life under such pleasant conditions as existed in the household of Ring Lardner, God bless him!

The story "Reunion" followed a visit paid the Lardners by the little woman's sisters and their husbands, all strict Swedenborgians and innately opposed to meat-eating and outdoor sports. Lardner was, of course, a devotee of golf and considered days spent indoors as days wasted. So it was torture to him, this prolonged sojourn of his in-laws, and "Reunion" was penned in a spirit of bitterness. The character of Mrs. Stu Johnston's brother is a composite of G. P. Torrence of Indianapolis, Robin Hendry of Detroit, H. W. Kitchell of Evanston, and F. R. Kitchell of Hingham, Mass., all of whom married sisters of Junior.

In re Lardner's golf, the following amusing anecdote is recounted:

Lardner was playing a mixed twosome with Mayor Walker of New York. They were both playing a Spalding mesh ball, which is how they got mixed. Coming to the fifteenth tee,

they had halved the preceding three holes and Lardner could not remember whose turn it was to drive first.

"Your honor?" he said to the Mayor.

"Yes?" the Mayor replied. "What can I do for you?"

It is incidents like this that paint the man in his true colors. He was forever blowing bubbles. It amounted to a whim.

The romance of "Mr. and Mrs. Fix-It," without ranking with Lardner's best or with his most popular compositions, and betraying here and there a less persistent hold on character than is usual with him, is still a fascinating story, full of his peculiar sensuousness and pathos, with striking scenes vividly portrayed, and an advance on his previous farces as respects his constantly growing power of imaginative description.

Publication of this story in Liberty caused an estrangement between the Master and the Grantland Rices, who were unmistakably the parties inspiring it. So accurately were their characters and idiosyncrasies depicted that they recognized themselves and did not speak

to Lardner for a week. This was considered a triumph by the Master.

"But the lesson was all lost," he told me afterwards, when a reconciliation had been effected. "They knew I was writing about them, and now they are right up to their old tricks again, dictating where we shall buy our shirts, how to discipline our kiddies, what road to take South, what to order for breakfast, when to bathe in what kind of bath salts, and even how often to visit the chiropodist. It is an intolerable example of maniacal Southern hospitality."

He proceeded to a fresh attack, turning out "Who Dealt?" Mrs. Rice is unquestionably the first person in this story, the one who tells it; either she or Ruth Hale or perhaps Mrs. S. B. Thorne.

There is an interesting fact connected with the story "Zone of Quiet." It was written outdoors during the equinoctial gales. Nearly every other sheet of copy was blown away or destroyed by stray dogs, and when the manuscript finally reached Ray Long, editor of Cosmopolitan, over two-thirds of it was mis-

sing. Mr. Long thought this all for the best as he was crowded that month. Mr. Long is related by marriage to Mr. O. O. McIntyre, which is considered a horse on both of them.*

Most of the stories making up this volume are noticeably shorter than those Lardner wrote in the early days of his tepid career. This is due to the invention and perfection of radio. Not content with purchasing one of the standard radios on the market, the Master, who, like Jane Cowl, was something of a mechanical genius, made his own set and installed it in the suit of pajamas which he habitually wore nights. At first he was unable to get any station at all, and this condition held good up to the day of his death. But he was always trying to tune in on Glens Falls, N. Y., and it was only in his last illness that he found out there was no broadcasting station at that place. His sense of humor came to his rescue in this dilemma.

* Strangely enough, Mr. Long's favorite amusement is horseback riding, so the innuendo is not so far out of the way. He is known as a keen whip around Greenwich and, during the winters, when he lives in town, can be seen in Times Square almost any morning astride his imported hunter, "Black Oxen," directing the traffic and selling tickets to the Field Day at Jamaica.

"Junior," he said to his wife, "they tell me there is no broadcasting station at Glens Falls."

"Am I to blame for that?" retorted the little Nordic, quick to take umbrage.*

"No," he answered. "It's Glens Falls."

Those of the tales in this book which have not already been mentioned were dashed off after the Master had contracted the cold that resulted in the fatal attack of conchoid, a disease which is superinduced by a rush of seashells to the auricle or outer ear. Present during the last hours were only myself and the wolf, Junior having chosen this time to get a shampoo and wave in preparation for the series of dinner dances that were bound to follow.

"Edna," whispered the Master as he lay there idly watching the doctor change a tire, "to-morrow I will be all right again and you and I will get in a taxi and be ourselves."

He called me Edna only when he was up to some devilment. It was his way.

* Junior was an inveterate umbrage taker and frequently took more than was good for her.

Introduction

The Master is gone* and the next question is who will succeed him? Perhaps some writer still unborn. Perhaps one who will never be born. That is what I hope.

*The joke is on Miss Spooldripper, for she is gone too. Two months ago she was found dead in the garage, her body covered with wolf bites left there by her former ward, who has probably forgotten where he left them.

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THE LOVE NEST

I

THE LOVE NEST

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do with you, Mr. Bartlett," said the great man. "I'm going to take you right out to my home and have you meet the wife and family; stay to dinner and all night. We've got plenty of room and extra pajamas, if you don't mind them silk. I mean that'll give you a chance to see us just as we are. I mean you can get more that way than if you sat here a whole week, asking me questions."

"But I don't want to put you to a lot of trouble," said Bartlett.

"Trouble!" The great man laughed. "There's no trouble about it. I've got a house that's like a hotel. I mean a big house with lots of servants. But anyway I'm always glad to do anything I can for a writing man, especially a man that works for Ralph Doane. I'm very fond of Ralph. I mean I like him personally besides being a great editor. I mean I've known him for years and when

there's anything I can do for him, I'm glad to do it. I mean it'll be a pleasure to have you. So if you want to notify your family——"

"I haven't any family," said Bartlett.

"Well, I'm sorry for you! And I bet when you see mine, you'll wish you had one of your own. But I'm glad you can come and we'll start now so as to get there before the kiddies are put away for the night. I mean I want you to be sure and see the kiddies. I've got three."

"I've seen their pictures," said Bartlett. "You must be very proud of them. They're all girls, aren't they?"

"Yes, sir; three girls. I wouldn't have a boy. I mean I always wanted girls. I mean girls have got a lot more zip to them. I mean they're a lot zippier. But let's go! The Rolls is down-stairs and if we start now we'll get there before dark. I mean I want you to see the place while it's still daylight."

The great man—Lou Gregg, president of Modern Pictures, Inc.—escorted his visitor from the magnificent office by a private door and down a private stairway to the avenue,

where the glittering car with its glittering chauffeur waited.

"My wife was in town today," said Gregg as they glided northward, "and I hoped we could ride out together, but she called up about two and asked would I mind if she went on home in the Pierce. She was through with her shopping and she hates to be away from the house and the kiddies any longer than she can help. Celia's a great home girl. You'd never know she was the same girl now as the girl I married seven years ago. I mean she's different. I mean she's not the same. I mean her marriage and being a mother has developed her. Did you ever see her? I mean in pictures?"

"I think I did once," replied Bartlett. "Didn't she play the young sister in 'The Cad'?"

"Yes, with Harold Hodgson and Marie Blythe."

"I thought I'd seen her. I remember her as very pretty and vivacious."

"She certainly was! And she is yet! I mean she's even prettier, but of course she ain't a

kid, though she looks it. I mean she was only seventeen in that picture and that was ten years ago. I mean she's twenty-seven years old now. But I never met a girl with as much zip as she had in those days. It's remarkable how marriage changes them. I mean nobody would ever thought Celia Sayles would turn out to be a sit-by-the-fire. I mean she still likes a good time, but her home and kiddies come first. I mean her home and kiddies come first."

"I see what you mean," said Bartlett.

An hour's drive brought them to Ardsley-on-Hudson and the great man's home.

"A wonderful place!" Bartlett exclaimed with a heroic semblance of enthusiasm as the car turned in at an *arc de triomphe* of a gateway and approached a white house that might have been mistaken for the Yale Bowl.

"It ought to be!" said Gregg. "I mean I've spent enough on it. I mean these things cost money."

He indicated with a gesture the huge house and Urbanesque landscaping.

"But no amount of money is too much to

spend on home. I mean it's a good investment if it tends to make your family proud and satisfied with their home. I mean every nickel I've spent here is like so much insurance; it insures me of a happy wife and family. And what more can a man ask!"

Bartlett didn't know, but the topic was forgotten in the business of leaving the resplendent Rolls and entering the even more resplendent reception hall.

"Forbes will take your things," said Gregg. "And, Forbes, you may tell Dennis that Mr. Bartlett will spend the night." He faced the wide stairway and raised his voice. "Sweetheart!" he called.

From above came the reply in contralto: "Hello, sweetheart!"

"Come down, sweetheart. I've brought you a visitor."

"All right, sweetheart, in just a minute."

Gregg led Bartlett into a living-room that was five laps to the mile and suggestive of an Atlantic City auction sale.

"Sit there," said the host, pointing to a balloon-stuffed easy chair, "and I'll see if we

can get a drink. I've got some real old Bourbon that I'd like you to try. You know I come from Chicago and I always liked Bourbon better than Scotch. I mean I always preferred it to Scotch. Forbes," he addressed the servant, "we want a drink. You'll find a full bottle of that Bourbon in the cupboard."

"It's only half full, sir," said Forbes.

"Half full! That's funny! I mean I opened it last night and just took one drink. I mean it ought to be full."

"It's only half full," repeated Forbes, and went to fetch it.

"I'll have to investigate," Gregg told his guest. "I mean this ain't the first time lately that some of my good stuff has disappeared. When you keep so many servants, it's hard to get all honest ones. But here's Celia!"

Bartlett rose to greet the striking brunette who at this moment made an entrance so Delsarte as to be almost painful. With never a glance at him, she minced across the room to her husband and took a half interest in a convincing kiss.

"Well, sweetheart," she said when it was at last over.

"This is Mr. Bartlett, sweetheart," said her husband. "Mr. Bartlett, meet Mrs. Gregg."

Bartlett shook his hostess's proffered two fingers.

"I'm so pleased!" said Celia in a voice reminiscent of Miss Claire's imitation of Miss Barrymore.

"Mr. Bartlett," Gregg went on, "is with Mankind, Ralph Doane's magazine. He is going to write me up; I mean us."

"No, you mean you," said Celia. "I'm sure the public is not interested in great men's wives."

"I am sure you are mistaken, Mrs. Gregg," said Bartlett politely. "In this case at least. You are worth writing up aside from being a great man's wife."

"I'm afraid you're a flatterer, Mr. Bartlett," she returned. "I have been out of the limelight so long that I doubt if anybody remembers me. I'm no longer an artist; merely a happy wife and mother."

"And I claim, sweetheart," said Gregg, "that it takes an artist to be that."

"Oh, no, sweetheart!" said Celia. "Not when they have you for a husband!"

The exchange of hosannahs was interrupted by the arrival of Forbes with the tray.

"Will you take yours straight or in a high-ball?" Gregg inquired of his guest. "Personally I like good whisky straight. I mean mixing it with water spoils the flavor. I mean whisky like this, it seems like a crime to mix it with water."

"I'll have mine straight," said Bartlett, who would have preferred a high-ball.

While the drinks were being prepared, he observed his hostess more closely and thought how much more charming she would be if she had used finesse in improving on nature. Her cheeks, her mouth, her eyes, and lashes had been, he guessed, far above the average in beauty before she had begun experimenting with them. And her experiments had been clumsy. She was handsome in spite of her efforts to be handsomer.

"Listen, sweetheart," said her husband. "One of the servants has been helping himself to this Bourbon. I mean it was a full bottle last night and I only had one little drink out of it. And now it's less than half full. Who do you suppose has been at it?"

"How do I know, sweetheart? Maybe the groceryman or the iceman or somebody."

"But you and I and Forbes are the only ones that have a key. I mean it was locked up."

"Maybe you forgot to lock it."

"I never do. Well, anyway, Bartlett, here's a go!"

"Doesn't Mrs. Gregg indulge?" asked Bartlett.

"Only a cocktail before dinner," said Celia. "Lou objects to me drinking whisky, and I don't like it much anyway."

"I don't object to you drinking whisky, sweetheart. I just object to you drinking to excess. I mean I think it coarsens a woman to drink. I mean it makes them coarse."

"Well, there's no argument, sweetheart. As I say, I don't care whether I have it or not."

"It certainly is great Bourbon!" said Bartlett, smacking his lips and putting his glass back on the tray.

"You bet it is!" Gregg agreed. "I mean you can't buy that kind of stuff any more. I mean it's real stuff. You help yourself when you want another. Mr. Bartlett is going to

stay all night, sweetheart. I told him he could get a whole lot more of a line on us that way than just interviewing me in the office. I mean I'm tongue-tied when it comes to talking about my work and my success. I mean it's better to see me out here as I am, in my home, with my family. I mean my home life speaks for itself without me saying a word."

"But, sweetheart," said his wife, "what about Mr. Latham?"

"Gosh! I forgot all about him! I must phone and see if I can call it off. That's terrible! You see," he explained to Bartlett, "I made a date to go up to Tarrytown tonight, to K. L. Latham's, the sugar people. We're going to talk over the new club. We're going to have a golf club that will make the rest of them look like a toy. I mean a real golf club! They want me to kind of run it. And I was to go up there tonight and talk it over. I'll phone and see if I can postpone it."

"Oh, don't postpone it on my account!" urged Bartlett. "I can come out again some other time, or I can see you in town."

"I don't see how you *can* postpone it,

sweetheart," said Celia. "Didn't he say old Mr. King was coming over from White Plains? They'll be mad at you if you don't go."

"I'm afraid they would resent it, sweetheart. Well, I'll tell you. You can entertain Mr. Bartlett and I'll go up there right after dinner and come back as soon as I can. And Bartlett and I can talk when I get back. I mean we can talk when I get back. How is that?"

"That suits me," said Bartlett.

"I'll be as entertaining as I can," said Celia, "but I'm afraid that isn't very entertaining. However, if I'm too much of a bore, there's plenty to read."

"No danger of my being bored," said Bartlett.

"Well, that's all fixed then," said the relieved host. "I hope you'll excuse me running away. But I don't see how I can get out of it. I mean with old King coming over from White Plains. I mean he's an old man. But listen, sweetheart—where are the kiddies? Mr. Bartlett wants to see them."

"Yes, indeed!" agreed the visitor.

"Of course you'd say so!" Celia said.

"But we *are* proud of them! I suppose all parents are the same. They all think their own children are the only children in the world. Isn't that so, Mr. Bartlett? Or haven't you any children?"

"I'm sorry to say I'm not married."

"Oh, you poor thing! We pity him, don't we, sweetheart? But why aren't you, Mr. Bartlett? Don't tell me you're a woman hater!"

"Not now, anyway," said the gallant Bartlett.

"Do you get that, sweetheart? He's paying you a pretty compliment."

"I heard it, sweetheart. And now I'm sure he's a flatterer. But I must hurry and get the children before Hortense puts them to bed."

"Well," said Gregg when his wife had left the room, "would you say she's changed?"

"A little, and for the better. She's more than fulfilled her early promise."

"I think so," said Gregg. "I mean I think she was a beautiful girl and now she's an even more beautiful woman. I mean wifehood and maternity have given her a kind of a—well,

you know—I mean a kind of a pose. I mean a pose. How about another drink?"

They were emptying their glasses when Celia returned with two of her little girls.

"The baby's in bed and I was afraid to ask Hortense to get her up again. But you'll see her in the morning. This is Norma and this is Grace. Girls, this is Mr. Bartlett."

The girls received this news calmly.

"Well, girls," said Bartlett.

"What do you think of them, Bartlett?" demanded their father. "I mean what do you think of them?"

"They're great!" replied the guest with creditable warmth.

"I mean aren't they pretty?"

"I should say they are!"

"There, girls! Why don't you thank Mr. Bartlett?"

"Thanks," murmured Norma.

"How old are you, Norma?" asked Bartlett.

"Six," said Norma.

"Well," said Bartlett. "And how old is Grace?"

"Four," replied Norma.

"Well," said Bartlett. "And how old is baby sister?"

"One and a half," answered Norma.

"Well," said Bartlett.

As this seemed to be final, "Come, girls," said their mother. "Kiss daddy good night and I'll take you back to Hortense."

"I'll take them," said Gregg. "I'm going up-stairs anyway. And you can show Bartlett around. I mean before it gets any darker."

"Good night, girls," said Bartlett, and the children murmured a good night.

"I'll come and see you before you're asleep," Celia told them. And after Gregg had led them out, "Do you really think they're pretty?" she asked Bartlett.

"I certainly do. Especially Norma. She's the image of you," said Bartlett.

"She looks a little like I used to," Celia admitted. "But I hope she doesn't look like me now. I'm too old looking."

"You look remarkably young!" said Bartlett. "No one would believe you were the mother of three children."

"Oh, Mr. Bartlett! But I mustn't forget

I'm to 'show you around.' Lou is so proud of our home!"

"And with reason," said Bartlett.

"It *is* wonderful! I call it our love nest. Quite a big nest, don't you think? Mother says it's too big to be cosy; she says she can't think of it as a home. But I always say a place is whatever one makes of it. A woman can be happy in a tent if they love each other. And miserable in a royal palace without love. Don't you think so, Mr. Bartlett?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Is this really such wonderful Bourbon? I think I'll just take a sip of it and see what it's like. It can't hurt me if it's so good. Do you think so, Mr. Bartlett?"

"I don't believe so."

"Well then, I'm going to taste it and if it hurts me it's your fault."

Celia poured a whisky glass two-thirds full and drained it at a gulp.

"It *is* good, isn't it?" she said. "Of course I'm not much of a judge as I don't care for whisky and Lou won't let me drink it. But he's raved so about this Bourbon that I did want

to see what it was like. You won't tell on me, will you, Mr. Bartlett?"

"Not I!"

"I wonder how it would be in a high-ball. Let's you and I have just one. But I'm forgetting I'm supposed to show you the place. We won't have time to drink a high-ball and see the place too before Lou comes down. Are you so crazy to see the place?"

"Not very."

"Well, then, what do you say if we have a high-ball? And it'll be a secret between you and I."

They drank in silence and Celia pressed a button by the door.

"You may take the bottle and tray," she told Forbes. "And now," she said to Bartlett, "we'll go out on the porch and see as much as we can see. You'll have to guess the rest."

Gregg, having changed his shirt and collar, joined them.

"Well," he said to Bartlett, "have you seen everything?"

"I guess I have, Mr. Gregg," lied the guest readily. "It's a wonderful place!"

"We like it. I mean it suits us. I mean it's my idear of a real home. And Celia calls it her love nest."

"So she told me," said Bartlett.

"She'll always be sentimental," said her husband.

He put his hand on her shoulder, but she drew away.

"I must run up and dress," she said.

"Dress!" exclaimed Bartlett, who had been dazzled by her flowered green chiffon.

"Oh, I'm not going to really dress," she said. "But I couldn't wear this thing for dinner!"

"Perhaps you'd like to clean up a little, Bartlett," said Gregg. "I mean Forbes will show you your room if you want to go up."

"It might be best," said Bartlett.

Celia, in a black lace dinner gown, was rather quiet during the elaborate meal. Three or four times when Gregg addressed her, she seemed to be thinking of something else and had to ask, "What did you say, sweetheart?" Her face was red and Bartlett imagined that she had "sneaked" a drink or two besides the

two helpings of Bourbon and the cocktail that had preceded dinner.

"Well, I'll leave you," said Gregg when they were in the living-room once more. "I mean the sooner I get started, the sooner I'll be back. Sweetheart, try and keep your guest awake and don't let him die of thirst. *Au revoir*, Bartlett. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. There's a fresh bottle of the Bourbon, so go to it. I mean help yourself. It's too bad you have to drink alone."

"It *is* too bad, Mr. Bartlett," said Celia when Gregg had gone.

"What's too bad?" asked Bartlett.

"That you have to drink alone. I feel like I wasn't being a good hostess to let you do it. In fact, I refuse to let you do it. I'll join you in just a little wee sip."

"But it's so soon after dinner!"

"It's never too soon! I'm going to have a drink myself and if you don't join me, you're a quitter."

She mixed two life-sized high-balls and handed one to her guest.

"Now we'll turn on the radio and see if we

can't stir things up. There! No, no! Who cares about the old baseball! Now! This is better! Let's dance."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Gregg, but I don't dance."

"Well, you're an old cheese! To make me dance alone! 'All alone, yes, I'm all alone.'"

There was no affectation in her voice now and Bartlett was amazed at her unlabored grace as she glided around the big room.

"But it's no fun alone," she complained. "Let's shut the damn thing off and talk."

"I love to watch you dance," said Bartlett.

"Yes, but I'm no Pavlowa," said Celia as she silenced the radio. "And besides, it's time for a drink."

"I've still got more than half of mine."

"Well, you had that wine at dinner, so I'll have to catch up with you."

She poured herself another high-ball and went at the task of "catching up."

"The trouble with you, Mr.—now isn't that a scream! I can't think of your name."

"Bartlett."

"The trouble with you, Barker—do you know what's the trouble with you? You're

too sober. See? You're too damn sober! That's the whole trouble, see? If you weren't so sober, we'd be better off. See? What I can't understand is how you can be so sober and me so high."

"You're not used to it."

"Not used to it! That's the cat's pajamas! Say, I'm like this half the time, see? If I wasn't, I'd die!"

"What does your husband say?"

"He don't say because he don't know. See, Barker? There's nights when he's out and there's a few nights when I'm out myself. And there's other nights when we're both in and I pretend I'm sleepy and I go up-stairs. See? But I don't go to bed. See? I have a little party all by myself. See? If I didn't, I'd die!"

"What do you mean, you'd die?"

"You're dumb, Barker! You may be sober, but you're dumb! Did you fall for all that apple sauce about the happy home and the contented wife? Listen, Barker—I'd give anything in the world to be out of this mess. I'd give anything to never see him again."

"Don't you love him any more? Doesn't he love you? Or what?"

"Love! I never did love him! I didn't know what love was! And all his love is for himself!"

"How did you happen to get married?"

"I was a kid; that's the answer. A kid and ambitious. See? He was a director then and he got stuck on me and I thought he'd make me a star. See, Barker? I married him to get myself a chance. And now look at me!"

"I'd say you were fairly well off."

"Well off, am I? I'd change places with the scum of the earth just to be free! See, Barker? And I could have been a star without any help if I'd only realized it. I had the looks and I had the talent. I've got it yet. I could be a Swanson and get myself a marquis; maybe a prince! And look what I did get! A self-satisfied, self-centered——! I thought he'd *make* me! See, Barker? Well, he's made me all right; he's made me a chronic mother and it's a wonder I've got any looks left.

"I fought at first. I told him marriage didn't mean giving up my art, my life work.

But it was no use. He wanted a beautiful wife and beautiful children for his beautiful home. Just to show us off. See? I'm part of his chattels. See, Barker? I'm just like his big diamond or his cars or his horses. And he wouldn't stand for his wife 'lowering' herself to act in pictures. Just as if pictures hadn't made him!

"You go back to your magazine tomorrow and write about our love nest. See, Barker? And be sure and don't get mixed and call it a baby ranch. Babies! You thought little Norma was pretty. Well, she is. And what is it going to get her? A rich —— of a husband that treats her like a ——! That's what it'll get her if I don't interfere. I hope I don't last long enough to see her grow up, but if I do, I'm going to advise her to run away from home and live her own life. And *be* somebody! Not a *thing* like I am! See, Barker?"

"Did you ever think of a divorce?"

"Did I ever think of one! Listen—but there's no chance. I've got nothing on him, and no matter what he had on me, he'd never let the world know it. He'd keep me here and

torture me like he does now, only worse. But I haven't done anything wrong, see? The men I might care for, they're all scared of him and his money and power. See, Barker? And the others are just as bad as him. Like fat old Morris, the hotel man, that everybody thinks he's a model husband. The reason he don't step out more is because he's too stingy. But I could have him if I wanted him. Every time he gets near enough to me, he squeezes my hand. I guess he thinks it's a nickel, the tight old ——! But come on, Barker. Let's have a drink. I'm running down."

"I think it's about time you were running up—up-stairs," said Bartlett. "If I were you, I'd try to be in bed and asleep when Gregg gets home."

"You're all right, Barker. And after this drink I'm going to do just as you say. Only I thought of it before you did, see? I think of it lots of nights. And tonight you can help me out by telling him I had a bad headache."

Left alone, Bartlett thought a while, then read, and finally dozed off. He was dozing when Gregg returned.

"Well, well, Bartlett," said the great man, "did Celia desert you?"

"It was perfectly all right, Mr. Gregg. She had a headache and I told her to go to bed."

"She's had a lot of headaches lately; reads too much, I guess. Well, I'm sorry I had this date. It was about a new golf club and I had to be there. I mean I'm going to be president of it. I see you consoled yourself with some of the Bourbon. I mean the bottle doesn't look as full as it did."

"I hope you'll forgive me for helping myself so generously," said Bartlett. "I don't get stuff like that every day!"

"Well, what do you say if we turn in? We can talk on the way to town tomorrow. Though I guess you won't have much to ask me. I guess you know all about us. I mean you know all about us now."

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Gregg. I've got plenty of material if I can just handle it."

Celia had not put in an appearance when Gregg and his guest were ready to leave the house next day.

"She always sleeps late," said Gregg. "I

mean she never wakes up very early. But she's later than usual this morning. Sweetheart!" he called up the stairs.

"Yes, sweetheart," came the reply.

"Mr. Bartlett's leaving now. I mean he's going."

"Oh, good-by, Mr. Bartlett. Please forgive me for not being down to see you off."

"You're forgiven, Mrs. Gregg. And thanks for your hospitality."

"Good-by, sweetheart!"

"Good-by, sweetheart!"

HAIRCUT

II

HAIRCUT

I got another barber that comes over from Carterville and helps me out Saturdays, but the rest of the time I can get along all right alone. You can see for yourself that this ain't no New York City and besides that, the most of the boys works all day and don't have no leisure to drop in here and get themselves prettied up.

You're a newcomer, ain't you? I thought I hadn't seen you round before. I hope you like it good enough to stay. As I say, we ain't no New York City or Chicago, but we have pretty good times. Not as good, though, since Jim Kendall got killed. When he was alive, him and Hod Meyers used to keep this town in an uproar. I bet they was more laughin' done here than any town its size in America.

Jim was comical, and Hod was pretty near a match for him. Since Jim's gone, Hod tries to hold his end up just the same as ever, but

it's tough goin' when you ain't got nobody to kind of work with.

They used to be plenty fun in here Saturdays. This place is jam-packed Saturdays, from four o'clock on. Jim and Hod would show up right after their supper, round six o'clock. Jim would set himself down in that big chair, nearest the blue spittoon. Whoever had been settin' in that chair, why they'd get up when Jim come in and give it to him.

You'd of thought it was a reserved seat like they have sometimes in a theayter. Hod would generally always stand or walk up and down, or some Saturdays, of course, he'd be settin' in this chair part of the time, gettin' a haircut.

Well, Jim would set there a w'ile without openin' his mouth only to spit, and then finally he'd say to me, "Whitey,"—my right name, that is, my right first name, is Dick, but everybody round here calls me Whitey—Jim would say, "Whitey, your nose looks like a rosebud tonight. You must of been drinkin' some of your aw de cologne."

So I'd say, "No, Jim, but you look like

you'd been drinkin' somethin' of that kind or somethin' worse."

Jim would have to laugh at that, but then he'd speak up and say, "No, I ain't had nothin' to drink, but that ain't sayin' I wouldn't like somethin'. I wouldn't even mind if it was wood alcohol."

Then Hod Meyers would say, "Neither would your wife." That would set everybody to laughin' because Jim and his wife wasn't on very good terms. She'd of divorced him only they wasn't no chance to get alimony and she didn't have no way to take care of herself and the kids. She couldn't never understand Jim. He *was* kind of rough, but a good fella at heart.

Him and Hod had all kinds of sport with Milt Sheppard. I don't suppose you've seen Milt. Well, he's got an Adam's apple that looks more like a mushmelon. So I'd be shavin' Milt and when I'd start to shave down here on his neck, Hod would holler, "Hey, Whitey, wait a minute! Before you cut into it, let's make up a pool and see who can guess closest to the number of seeds."

And Jim would say, "If Milt hadn't of been so hoggish, he'd of ordered a half a cantaloupe instead of a whole one and it might not of stuck in his throat."

All the boys would roar at this and Milt himself would force a smile, though the joke was on him. Jim certainly was a card!

There's his shavin' mug, settin' on the shelf, right next to Charley Vail's. "Charles M. Vail." That's the druggist. He comes in regular for his shave, three times a week. And Jim's is the cup next to Charley's. "James H. Kendall." Jim won't need no shavin' mug no more, but I'll leave it there just the same for old time's sake. Jim certainly was a character!

Years ago, Jim used to travel for a canned goods concern over in Carterville. They sold canned goods. Jim had the whole northern half of the State and was on the road five days out of every week. He'd drop in here Saturdays and tell his experiences for that week. It was rich.

I guess he paid more attention to playin' jokes than makin' sales. Finally the concern

let him out and he come right home here and told everybody he'd been fired instead of sayin' he'd resigned like most fellas would of.

It was a Saturday and the shop was full and Jim got up out of that chair and says, "Gentlemen, I got an important announcement to make. I been fired from my job."

Well, they asked him if he was in earnest and he said he was and nobody could think of nothin' to say till Jim finally broke the ice himself. He says, "I been sellin' canned goods and now I'm canned goods myself."

You see, the concern he'd been workin' for was a factory that made canned goods. Over in Carterville. And now Jim said he was canned himself. He was certainly a card!

Jim had a great trick that he used to play w'ile he was travelin'. For instance, he'd be ridin' on a train and they'd come to some little town like, well, like, we'll say, like Benton. Jim would look out the train window and read the signs on the stores.

For instance, they'd be a sign, "Henry Smith, Dry Goods." Well, Jim would write down the name and the name of the town and

when he got to wherever he was goin' he'd mail back a postal card to Henry Smith at Benton and not sign no name to it, but he'd write on the card, well, somethin' like "Ask your wife about that book agent that spent the afternoon last week," or "Ask your Missus who kept her from gettin' lonesome the last time you was in Carterville." And he'd sign the card, "A Friend."

Of course, he never knew what really come of none of these jokes, but he could picture what *probably* happened and that was enough.

Jim didn't work very steady after he lost his position with the Carterville people. What he did earn, doin' odd jobs round town, why he spent pretty near all of it on gin and his family might of starved if the stores hadn't of carried them along. Jim's wife tried her hand at dressmakin', but they ain't nobody goin' to get rich makin' dresses in this town.

As I say, she'd of divorced Jim, only she seen that she couldn't support herself and the kids and she was always hopin' that some day Jim would cut out his habits and give her more than two or three dollars a week.

They was a time when she would go to whoever he was workin' for and ask them to give her his wages, but after she done this once or twice, he beat her to it by borrowin' most of his pay in advance. He told it all round town, how he had outfoxed his Missus. He certainly was a caution!

But he wasn't satisfied with just outwittin' her. He was sore the way she had acted, tryin' to grab off his pay. And he made up his mind he'd get even. Well, he waited till Evans's Circus was advertised to come to town. Then he told his wife and two kiddies that he was goin' to take them to the circus. The day of the circus, he told them he would get the tickets and meet them outside the entrance to the tent.

Well, he didn't have no intentions of bein' there or buyin' tickets or nothin'. He got full of gin and laid round Wright's poolroom all day. His wife and the kids waited and waited and of course he didn't show up. His wife didn't have a dime with her, or nowhere else, I guess. So she finally had to tell the kids it was all off and they cried like they wasn't never goin' to stop.

Well, it seems, w'ile they was cryin', Doc Stair came along and he asked what was the matter, but Mrs. Kendall was stubborn and wouldn't tell him, but the kids told him and he insisted on takin' them and their mother in the show. Jim found this out afterwards and it was one reason why he had it in for Doc Stair.

Doc Stair come here about a year and a half ago. He's a mighty handsome young fella and his clothes always look like he has them made to order. He goes to Detroit two or three times a year and w'ile he's there he must have a tailor take his measure and then make him a suit to order. They cost pretty near twice as much, but they fit a whole lot better than if you just bought them in a store.

For a w'ile everybody was wonderin' why a young doctor like Doc Stair should come to a town like this where we already got old Doc Gamble and Doc Foote that's both been here for years and all the practice in town was always divided between the two of them.

Then they was a story got round that Doc Stair's gal had throwed him over, a gal up in the Northern Peninsula somewheres, and the

reason he come here was to hide himself away and forget it. He said himself that he thought they wasn't nothin' like general practice in a place like ours to fit a man to be a good all round doctor. And that's why he'd came.

Anyways, it wasn't long before he was makin' enough to live on, though they tell me that he never dunned nobody for what they owed him, and the folks here certainly has got the owin' habit, even in my business. If I had all that was comin' to me for just shaves alone, I could go to Carterville and put up at the Mercer for a week and see a different picture every night. For instance, they's old George Purdy—but I guess I shouldn't ought to be gossipin'.

Well, last year, our coroner died, died of the flu. Ken Beatty, that was his name. He was the coroner. So they had to choose another man to be coroner in his place and they picked Doc Stair. He laughed at first and said he didn't want it, but they made him take it. It ain't no job that anybody would fight for and what a man makes out of it in a year would just about buy seeds for their garden. Doc's

the kind, though, that can't say no to nothin' if you keep at him long enough.

But I was goin' to tell you about a poor boy we got here in town—Paul Dickson. He fell out of a tree when he was about ten years old. Lit on his head and it done somethin' to him and he ain't never been right. No harm in him, but just silly. Jim Kendall used to call him cuckoo; that's a name Jim had for anybody that was off their head, only he called people's head their bean. That was another of his gags, callin' head bean and callin' crazy people cuckoo. Only poor Paul ain't crazy, but just silly.

You can imagine that Jim used to have all kinds of fun with Paul. He'd send him to the White Front Garage for a left-handed monkey wrench. Of course they ain't no such a thing as a left-handed monkey wrench.

And once we had a kind of a fair here and they was a baseball game between the fats and the leans and before the game started Jim called Paul over and sent him way down to Schrader's hardware store to get a key for the pitcher's box.

They wasn't nothin' in the way of gags that Jim couldn't think up, when he put his mind to it.

Poor Paul was always kind of suspicious of people, maybe on account of how Jim had kept foolin' him. Paul wouldn't have much to do with anybody only his own mother and Doc Stair and a girl here in town named Julie Gregg. That is, she ain't a girl no more, but pretty near thirty or over.

When Doc first come to town, Paul seemed to feel like here was a real friend and he hung round Doc's office most of the w'ile; the only time he wasn't there was when he'd go home to eat or sleep or when he seen Julie Gregg doin' her shoppin'.

When he looked out Doc's window and seen her, he'd run downstairs and join her and tag along with her to the different stores. The poor boy was crazy about Julie and she always treated him mighty nice and made him feel like he was welcome, though of course it wasn't nothin' but pity on her side.

Doc done all he could to improve Paul's mind and he told me once that he really

thought the boy was gettin' better, that they was times when he was as bright and sensible as anybody else.

But I was goin' to tell you about Julie Gregg. Old Man Gregg was in the lumber business, but got to drinkin' and lost the most of his money and when he died, he didn't leave nothin' but the house and just enough insurance for the girl to skimp along on.

Her mother was a kind of a half invalid and didn't hardly ever leave the house. Julie wanted to sell the place and move somewheres else after the old man died, but the mother said she was born here and would die here. It was tough on Julie, as the young people round this town—well, she's too good for them.

She's been away to school and Chicago and New York and different places and they ain't no subject she can't talk on, where you take the rest of the young folks here and you mention anything to them outside of Gloria Swanson or Tommy Meighan and they think you're delirious. Did you see Gloria in Wages of Virtue? You missed somethin'!

Well, Doc Stair hadn't been here more than

a week when he come in one day to get shaved and I recognized who he was as he had been pointed out to me, so I told him about my old lady. She's been ailin' for a couple years and either Doc Gamble or Doc Foote, neither one, seemed to be helpin' her. So he said he would come out and see her, but if she was able to get out herself, it would be better to bring her to his office where he could make a completer examination.

So I took her to his office and w'ile I was waitin' for her in the reception room, in come Julie Gregg. When somebody comes in Doc Stair's office, they's a bell that rings in his inside office so as he can tell they's somebody to see him.

So he left my old lady inside and come out to the front office and that's the first time him and Julie met and I guess it was what they call love at first sight. But it wasn't fifty-fifty. This young fella was the slickest lookin' fella she'd ever seen in this town and she went wild over him. To him she was just a young lady that wanted to see the doctor.

She'd came on about the same business I

had. Her mother had been doctorin' for years with Doc Gamble and Doc Foote and without no results. So she'd heard they was a new doc in town and decided to give him a try. He promised to call and see her mother that same day.

I said a minute ago that it was love at first sight on her part. I'm not only judgin' by how she acted afterwards but how she looked at him that first day in his office. I ain't no mind reader, but it was wrote all over her face that she was gone.

Now Jim Kendall, besides bein' a jokesmith and a pretty good drinker, well, Jim was quite a lady-killer. I guess he run pretty wild durin' the time he was on the road for them Carterville people, and besides that, he'd had a couple little affairs of the heart right here in town. As I say, his wife could of divorced him, only she couldn't.

But Jim was like the majority of men, and women, too, I guess. He wanted what he couldn't get. He wanted Julie Gregg and worked his head off tryin' to land her. Only he'd of said bean instead of head.

Well, Jim's habits and his jokes didn't appeal to Julie and of course he was a married man, so he didn't have no more chance than, well, than a rabbit. That's an expression of Jim's himself. When somebody didn't have no chance to get elected or somethin', Jim would always say they didn't have no more chance than a rabbit.

He didn't make no bones about how he felt. Right in here, more than once, in front of the whole crowd, he said he was stuck on Julie and anybody that could get her for him was welcome to his house and his wife and kids included. But she wouldn't have nothin' to do with him; wouldn't even speak to him on the street. He finally seen he wasn't gettin' nowheres with his usual line so he decided to try the rough stuff. He went right up to her house one evenin' and when she opened the door he forced his way in and grabbed her. But she broke loose and before he could stop her, she run in the next room and locked the door and phoned to Joe Barnes. Joe's the marshal. Jim could hear who she was phonin' to and he beat it before Joe got there.

Joe was an old friend of Julie's pa. Joe went to Jim the next day and told him what would happen if he ever done it again.

I don't know how the news of this little affair leaked out. Chances is that Joe Barnes told his wife and she told somebody else's wife and they told their husband. Anyways, it did leak out and Hod Meyers had the nerve to kid Jim about it, right here in this shop. Jim didn't deny nothin' and kind of laughed it off and said for us all to wait; that lots of people had tried to make a monkey out of him, but he always got even.

Meanw'ile everybody in town was wise to Julie's bein' wild mad over the Doc. I don't suppose she had any idear how her face changed when him and her was together; of course she couldn't of, or she'd of kept away from him. And she didn't know that we was all noticin' how many times she made excuses to go up to his office or pass it on the other side of the street and look up in his window to see if he was there. I felt sorry for her and so did most other people.

Hod Meyers kept rubbin' it into Jim about

how the Doc had cut him out. Jim didn't pay no attention to the kiddin' and you could see he was plannin' one of his jokes.

One trick Jim had was the knack of changin' his voice. He could make you think he was a girl talkin' and he could mimic any man's voice. To show you how good he was along this line, I'll tell you the joke he played on me once.

You know, in most towns of any size, when a man is dead and needs a shave, why the barber that shaves him soaks him five dollars for the job; that is, he don't soak *him*, but whoever ordered the shave. I just charge three dollars because personally I don't mind much shavin' a dead person. They lay a whole lot stiller than live customers. The only thing is that you don't feel like talkin' to them and you get kind of lonesome.

Well, about the coldest day we ever had here, two years ago last winter, the phone rung at the house w'ile I was home to dinner and I answered the phone and it was a woman's voice and she said she was Mrs. John Scott and her husband was dead and would I come out and shave him.

Old John had always been a good customer of mine. But they live seven miles out in the country, on the Streeter road. Still I didn't see how I could say no.

So I said I would be there, but would have to come in a jitney and it might cost three or four dollars besides the price of the shave. So she, or the voice, it said that was all right, so I got Frank Abbott to drive me out to the place and when I got there, who should open the door but old John himself! He wasn't no more dead than, well, than a rabbit.

It didn't take no private detective to figure out who had played me this little joke. Nobody could of thought it up but Jim Kendall. He certainly was a card!

I tell you this incident just to show you how he could disguise his voice and make you believe it was somebody else talkin'. I'd of swore it was Mrs. Scott had called me. Anyways, some woman.

Well, Jim waited till he had Doc Stair's voice down pat; then he went after revenge.

He called Julie up on a night when he knew Doc was over in Carterville. She never ques-

tioned but what it was Doc's voice. Jim said he must see her that night; he couldn't wait no longer to tell her somethin'. She was all excited and told him to come to the house. But he said he was expectin' an important long distance call and wouldn't she please forget her manners for once and come to his office. He said they couldn't nothin' hurt her and nobody would see her and he just *must* talk to her a little w'ile. Well, poor Julie fell for it.

Doc always keeps a night light in his office, so it looked to Julie like they was somebody there.

Meanw'ile Jim Kendall had went to Wright's poolroom, where they was a whole gang amusin' themselves. The most of them had drank plenty of gin, and they was a rough bunch even when sober. They was always strong for Jim's jokes and when he told them to come with him and see some fun they give up their card games and pool games and followed along.

Doc's office is on the second floor. Right outside his door they's a flight of stairs leadin'

to the floor above. Jim and his gang hid in the dark behind these stairs.

Well, Julie come up to Doc's door and rung the bell and they was nothin' doin'. She rung it again and she rung it seven or eight times. Then she tried the door and found it locked. Then Jim made some kind of a noise and she heard it and waited a minute, and then she says, "Is that you, Ralph?" Ralph is Doc's first name.

They was no answer and it must of came to her all of a sudden that she'd been bunked. She pretty near fell downstairs and the whole gang after her. They chased her all the way home, hollerin', "Is that you, Ralph?" and "Oh, Ralphie, dear, is that you?" Jim says he couldn't holler it himself, as he was laughin' too hard.

Poor Julie! She didn't show up here on Main Street for a long, long time afterward.

And of course Jim and his gang told everybody in town, everybody but Doc Stair. They was scared to tell him, and he might of never knowed only for Paul Dickson. The poor cuckoo, as Jim called him, he was here in the

shop one night when Jim was still gloatin' yet over what he'd done to Julie. And Paul took in as much of it as he could understand and he run to Doc with the story.

It's a cinch Doc went up in the air and swore he'd make Jim suffer. But it was a kind of a delicate thing, because if it got out that he had beat Jim up, Julie was bound to hear of it and then she'd know that Doc knew and of course knowin' that he knew would make it worse for her than ever. He was goin' to do somethin', but it took a lot of figurin'.

Well, it was a couple days later when Jim was here in the shop again, and so was the cuckoo. Jim was goin' duck-shootin' the next day and had came in lookin' for Hod Meyers to go with him. I happened to know that Hod had went over to Carterville and wouldn't be home till the end of the week. So Jim said he hated to go alone and he guessed he would call it off. Then poor Paul spoke up and said if Jim would take him he would go along. Jim thought a w'ile and then he said, well, he guessed a half-wit was better than nothin'.

I suppose he was plottin' to get Paul out in

the boat and play some joke on him, like pushin' him in the water. Anyways, he said Paul could go. He asked him had he ever shot a duck and Paul said no, he'd never even had a gun in his hands. So Jim said he could set in the boat and watch him and if he behaved himself, he might lend him his gun for a couple of shots. They made a date to meet in the mornin' and that's the last I seen of Jim alive.

Next mornin', I hadn't been open more than ten minutes when Doc Stair come in. He looked kind of nervous. He asked me had I seen Paul Dickson. I said no, but I knew where he was, out duck-shootin' with Jim Kendall. So Doc says that's what he had heard, and he couldn't understand it because Paul had told him he wouldn't never have no more to do with Jim as long as he lived.

He said Paul had told him about the joke Jim had played on Julie. He said Paul had asked him what he thought of the joke and the Doc had told him that anybody that would do a thing like that ought not to be let live.

I said it had been a kind of a raw thing, but

Jim just couldn't resist no kind of a joke, no matter how raw. I said I thought he was all right at heart, but just bubblin' over with mischief. Doc turned and walked out.

At noon he got a phone call from old John Scott. The lake where Jim and Paul had went shootin' is on John's place. Paul had came runnin' up to the house a few minutes before and said they'd been an accident. Jim had shot a few ducks and then give the gun to Paul and told him to try his luck. Paul hadn't never handled a gun and he was nervous. He was shakin' so hard that he couldn't control the gun. He let fire and Jim sunk back in the boat, dead.

Doc Stair, bein' the coroner, jumped in Frank Abbott's flivver and rushed out to Scott's farm. Paul and old John was down on the shore of the lake. Paul had rowed the boat to shore, but they'd left the body in it, waitin' for Doc to come.

Doc examined the body and said they might as well fetch it back to town. They was no use leavin' it there or callin' a jury, as it was a plain case of accidental shootin'.

Personally I wouldn't never leave a person shoot a gun in the same boat I was in unless I was sure they knew somethin' about guns. Jim was a sucker to leave a new beginner have his gun, let alone a half-wit. It probably served Jim right, what he got. But still we miss him round here. He certainly was a card!

Comb it wet or dry?

ZONE OF QUIET

III

ZONE OF QUIET

"Well," said the Doctor briskly, "how do you feel?"

"Oh, I guess I'm all right," replied the man in bed. "I'm still kind of drowsy, that's all."

"You were under the anesthetic an hour and a half. It's no wonder you aren't wide awake yet. But you'll be better after a good night's rest, and I've left something with Miss Lyons that'll make you sleep. I'm going along now. Miss Lyons will take good care of you."

"I'm off at seven o'clock," said Miss Lyons. "I'm going to a show with my G. F. But Miss Halsey's all right. She's the night floor nurse. Anything you want, she'll get it for you. What can I give him to eat, Doctor?"

"Nothing at all; not till after I've been here tomorrow. He'll be better off without anything. Just see that he's kept quiet. Don't

let him talk, and don't talk to him; that is, if you can help it."

"Help it!" said Miss Lyons. "Say, I can be old lady Sphinx herself when I want to! Sometimes I sit for hours—not alone, neither —and never say a word. Just think and think. And dream.

"I had a G. F. in Baltimore, where I took my training; she used to call me Dummy. Not because I'm dumb like some people—you know—but because I'd sit there and not say nothing. She'd say, 'A penny for your thoughts, Eleanor.' That's my first name—Eleanor."

"Well, I must run along. I'll see you in the morning."

"Good-by, Doctor," said the man in bed, as he went out.

"Good-by, Doctor Cox," said Miss Lyons as the door closed.

"He seems like an awful nice fella," said Miss Lyons. "And a good doctor, too. This is the first time I've been on a case with him. He gives a girl credit for having some sense. Most of these doctors treat us like they

thought we were Mormons or something. Like Doctor Holland. I was on a case with him last week. He treated me like I was a Mormon or something. Finally, I told him, I said, 'I'm not as dumb as I look.' She died Friday night."

"Who?" asked the man in bed.

"The woman; the case I was on," said Miss Lyons.

"And what did the doctor say when you told him you weren't as dumb as you look?"

"I don't remember," said Miss Lyons. "He said, 'I hope not,' or something. What *could* he say? Gee! It's quarter to seven. I hadn't no idear it was so late. I must get busy and fix you up for the night. And I'll tell Miss Halsey to take good care of you. We're going to see 'What Price Glory?' I'm going with my G. F. Her B. F. gave her the tickets and he's going to meet us after the show and take us to supper.

"Marian—that's my G. F.—she's crazy wild about him. And he's crazy about her, to hear her tell it. But I said to her this noon—she called me up on the phone—I said to her,

'If he's so crazy about you, why don't he propose? He's got plenty of money and no strings tied to him, and as far as I can see there's no reason why he shouldn't marry you if he wants you as bad as you say he does.' So she said maybe he was going to ask her tonight. I told her, 'Don't be silly! Would he drag me along if he was going to ask you?'

"That about him having plenty of money, though, that's a joke. He told her he had and she believes him. I haven't met him yet, but he looks in his picture like he's lucky if he's getting twenty-five dollars a week. She thinks he must be rich because he's in Wall Street. I told her, I said, 'That being in Wall Street don't mean nothing. What does he do there? is the question. You know they have to have janitors in those buildings just the same like anywhere else.' But she thinks he's God or somebody.

"She keeps asking me if I don't think he's the best looking thing I ever saw. I tell her yes, sure, but between you and I, I don't believe anybody'd ever mistake him for Richard Barthelmess.

"Oh, say! I saw him the other day, coming out of the Algonquin! He's the best looking thing! Even better looking than on the screen. Roy Stewart."

"What about Roy Stewart?" asked the man in bed.

"Oh, he's the fella I was telling you about," said Miss Lyons. "He's my G. F.'s B. F."

"Maybe I'm a D. F. not to know, but would you tell me what a B. F. and G. F. are?"

"Well, you *are* dumb, aren't you!" said Miss Lyons. "A G. F., that's a girl friend, and a B. F. is a boy friend. I thought everybody knew that.

"I'm going out now and find Miss Halsey and tell her to be nice to you. But maybe I better not."

"Why not?" asked the man in bed.

"Oh, nothing. I was just thinking of something funny that happened last time I was on a case in this hospital. It was the day the man had been operated on and he was the best looking somebody you ever saw. So when I went off duty I told Miss Halsey to be nice to him, like I was going to tell her about

you. And when I came back in the morning he was dead. Isn't that funny?"

"Very!"

"Well," said Miss Lyons, "did you have a good night? You look a lot better, anyway. How'd you like Miss Halsey? Did you notice her ankles? She's got pretty near the smallest ankles I ever saw. Cute. I remember one day Tyler—that's one of the internes—he said if he could just see our ankles, mine and Miss Halsey's, he wouldn't know which was which. Of course we don't look anything alike other ways. She's pretty close to thirty and—well, nobody'd ever take her for Julia Hoyt. Helen."

"Who's Helen?" asked the man in bed.

"Helen Halsey. Helen; that's her first name. She was engaged to a man in Boston. He was going to Tufts College. He was going to be a doctor. But he died. She still carries his picture with her. I tell her she's silly to mope about a man that's been dead four years. And besides a girl's a fool to marry a doctor. They've got too many alibis.

"When I marry somebody, he's got to be a somebody that has regular office hours like he's in Wall Street or somewhere. Then when he don't come home, he'll have to think up something better than being 'on a case.' I used to use that on my sister when we were living together. When I happened to be out late, I'd tell her I was on a case. She never knew the difference. Poor sis! She married a terrible oil can! But she didn't have the looks to get a real somebody. I'm making this for her. It's a bridge table cover for her birthday. She'll be twenty-nine. Don't that seem old?"

"Maybe to you; not to me," said the man in bed.

"You're about forty, aren't you?" said Miss Lyons.

"Just about."

"And how old would you say I am?"

"Twenty-three."

"I'm twenty-five," said Miss Lyons. "Twenty-five and forty. That's fifteen years' difference. But I know a married couple that the husband is forty-five and she's only twenty-four, and they get along fine."

"I'm married myself," said the man in bed.

"You would be!" said Miss Lyons. "The last four cases I've been on was all married men. But at that, I'd rather have any kind of a man than a woman. I hate women! I mean sick ones. They treat a nurse like a dog, especially a pretty nurse. What's that you're reading?"

"'Vanity Fair,'" replied the man in bed.

"'Vanity Fair.' I thought that was a magazine."

"Well, there's a magazine *and* a book. This is the book."

"Is it about a girl?"

"Yes."

"I haven't read it yet. I've been busy making this thing for my sister's birthday. She'll be twenty-nine. It's a bridge table cover. When you get that old, about all there is left is bridge or cross-word puzzles. Are you a puzzle fan? I did them religiously for a while, but I got sick of them. They put in such crazy words. Like one day they had a word with only three letters and it said 'A e-longated

fish' and the first letter had to be an *e*. And only three letters. That *couldn't* be right! So I said if they put things wrong like that, what's the use? Life's too short. And we only live once. When you're dead, you stay a long time dead.

"That's what a B. F. of mine used to say. He was a caution! But he was crazy about me. I might of married him only for a G. F. telling him lies about me. And called herself my friend! Charley Pierce."

"Who's Charley Pierce?"

"That was my B. F. that the other girl lied to him about me. I told him, I said, 'Well, if you believe all them stories about me, maybe we better part once and for all. I don't want to be tied up to a somebody that believes all the dirt they hear about me.' So he said he didn't really believe it and if I would take him back he wouldn't quarrel with me no more. But I said I thought it was best for us to part. I got their announcement two years ago, while I was still in training in Baltimore."

"Did he marry the girl that lied to him about you?"

"Yes, the poor fish! And I bet he's satisfied! They're a match for each other! He was all right, though, at that, till he fell for her. He used to be so thoughtful of me, like I was his sister or something.

"I like a man to *respect* me. Most fellas wants to kiss you before they know your name.

"Golly! I'm sleepy this morning! And got a right to be, too. Do you know what time I got home last night, or this morning, rather? Well, it was half past three. What would mama say if she could see her little girl now! But we did have a good time. First we went to the show—'What Price Glory?'—I and my G. F.—and afterwards her B. F. met us and took us in a taxi down to Barney Gallant's. Peewee Byers has got the orchestra there now. Used to be with Whiteman's. Gee! How he can dance! I mean Roy."

"Your G. F.'s B. F.?"

"Yes, but I don't believe he's as crazy about her as she thinks he is. Anyway—but this is a secret—he took down the phone number of the hospital while Marian was out powdering

her nose, and he said he'd give me a ring about noon. Gee! I'm sleepy! Roy Stewart!"

"Well," said Miss Lyons, "how's my patient? I'm twenty minutes late, but honest, it's a wonder I got up at all! Two nights in succession is too much for this child!"

"Barney Gallant's again?" asked the man in bed.

"No, but it was dancing, and pretty near as late. It'll be different tonight. I'm going to bed just the minute I get home. But I did have a dandy time. And I'm just crazy about a certain somebody."

"Roy Stewart?"

"How'd you guess it? But honest, he's wonderful! And so different than most of the fellas I've met. He says the craziest things, just keeps you in hysterics. We were talking about books and reading, and he asked me if I liked poetry—only he called it 'poultry'—and I said I was wild about it and Edgar M. Guest was just about my favorite, and then I asked him if he liked Kipling and what do you think he said? He said he didn't know; he'd never kipled.

"He's a scream! We just sat there in the house till half past eleven and didn't do nothing but just talk and the time went like we was at a show. He's better than a show. But finally I noticed how late it was and I asked him didn't he think he better be going and he said he'd go if I'd go with him, so I asked him where could we go at that hour of night, and he said he knew a road-house just a little ways away, and I didn't want to go, but he said we wouldn't stay for only just one dance, so I went with him. To the Jericho Inn.

"I don't know what the woman thought of me where I stay, going out that time of night. But he *is* such a wonderful dancer and such a perfect gentleman! Of course we had more than one dance and it was after two o'clock before I knew it. We had some gin, too, but he just kissed me once and that was when we said good night."

"What about your G. F., Marian? Does she know?"

"About Roy and I? No. I always say that what a person don't know don't hurt them. Besides, there's nothing *for* her to know—yet.

But listen: If there was a chance in the world for her, if I thought he cared anything about her, I'd be the last one in the world to accept his intentions. I hope I'm not that kind! But as far as anything serious between them is concerned, well, it's cold. I happen to *know* that! She's not the girl for him.

"In the first place, while she's pretty in a way, her complexion's bad and her hair's scraggy and her figure, well, it's like some woman in the funny pictures. And she's not peppy enough for Roy. She'd rather stay home than do anything. Stay home! It'll be time enough for that when you can't get anybody to take you out.

"She'd never make a wife for him. He'll be a rich man in another year; that is, if things go right for him in Wall Street like he expects. And a man as rich as he'll be wants a wife that can live up to it and entertain and step out once in a while. He don't want a wife that's a drag on him. And he's too good-looking for Marian. A fella as good-looking as him needs a pretty wife or the first thing you know some girl that is pretty will steal him off of you.

But it's silly to talk about them marrying each other. He'd have to ask her first, and he's not going to. I know! So I don't feel at all like I'm trespassing.

"Anyway, you know the old saying, everything goes in love. And I—— But I'm keeping you from reading your book. Oh, yes; I almost forgot a T. L. that Miss Halsey said about you. Do you know what a T. L. is?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, you give me one and I'll give you this one."

"But I haven't talked to anybody but the Doctor. I can give you one from myself. He asked me how I liked you and I said all right."

"Well, that's better than nothing. Here's what Miss Halsey said: She said if you were shaved and fixed up, you wouldn't be bad. And now I'm going out and see if there's any mail for me. Most of my mail goes to where I live, but some of it comes here sometimes. What I'm looking for is a letter from the state board telling me if I passed my state examination. They ask you the craziest questions. Like 'Is ice a disinfectant?' Who cares! No-

body's going to waste ice to kill germs when there's so much of it needed in high-balls. Do you like high-balls? Roy says it spoils whisky to mix it with water. He takes it straight. He's a terror! But maybe you want to read."

"Good morning," said Miss Lyons. "Did you sleep good?"

"Not so good," said the man in bed. "I——"

"I bet you got more sleep than I did," said Miss Lyons. "He's the most persistent somebody I ever knew! I asked him last night, I said, 'Don't you never get tired of dancing?' So he said, well, he did get tired of dancing with some people, but there was others who he never got tired of dancing with them. So I said, 'Yes, Mr. Jollier, but I wasn't born yesterday and I know apple sauce when I hear it and I bet you've told that to fifty girls.' I guess he really did mean it, though.

"Of course most anybody'd rather dance with slender girls than stout girls. I remember a B. F. I had one time in Washington. He

said dancing with me was just like dancing with nothing. That sounds like he was insulting me, but it was really a compliment. He meant it wasn't any effort to dance with me like with some girls. You take Marian, for instance, and while I'm crazy about her, still that don't make her a good dancer and dancing with her must be a good deal like moving the piano or something.

"I'd die if I was fat! People are always making jokes about fat people. And there's the old saying, 'Nobody loves a fat man.' And it's even worse with a girl. Besides people making jokes about them and don't want to dance with them and so forth, besides that they're always trying to reduce and can't eat what they want to. I bet, though, if I was fat, I'd eat everything in sight. Though I guess not, either. Because I hardly eat anything as it is. But they do make jokes about them.

"I'll never forget one day last winter, I was on a case in Great Neck and the man's wife was the fattest thing! So they had a radio in the house and one day she saw in the paper

where Bugs Baer was going to talk on the radio and it would probably be awfully funny because he writes so crazy. Do you ever read his articles? But this woman, she was awfully sensitive about being fat and I nearly died sitting there with her listening to Bugs Baer, because his whole talk was all about some fat woman and he said the craziest things, but I couldn't laugh on account of she being there in the room with me. One thing he said was that the woman, this woman he was talking about, he said she was so fat that she wore a wrist watch on her thumb. Henry J. Belden."

"Who is Henry J. Belden? Is that the name of Bugs Baer's fat lady?"

"No, you crazy!" said Miss Lyons. "Mr. Belden was the case I was on in Great Neck. He died."

"It seems to me a good many of your cases die."

"Isn't it a scream!" said Miss Lyons. "But it's true; that is, it's been true lately. The last five cases I've been on has all died. Of course it's just luck, but the girls have been kidding me about it and calling me a jinx, and when

Miss Halsey saw me here the evening of the day you was operated, she said, 'God help him!' That's the night floor nurse's name. But you're going to be mean and live through it and spoil my record, aren't you? I'm just kidding. Of course I want you to get all right.

"But it *is* queer, the way things have happened, and it's made me feel kind of creepy. And besides, I'm not like some of the girls and don't care. I get awfully fond of some of my cases and I hate to see them die, especially if they're men and not very sick and treat you half-way decent and don't yell for you the minute you go out of the room. There's only one case I was ever on where I didn't mind her dying and that was a woman. She had nephritis. Mrs. Judson.

"Do you want some gum? I chew it just when I'm nervous. And I always get nervous when I don't have enough sleep. You can bet I'll stay home tonight, B. F. or no B. F. But anyway he's got an engagement tonight, some directors' meeting or something. He's the busiest somebody in the world. And I told

him last night, I said, 'I should think you'd need sleep, too, even more than I do because you have to have all your wits about you in your business or those big bankers would take advantage and rob you. You can't afford to be sleepy,' I told him.

"So he said, 'No, but of course it's all right for you, because if you go to sleep on your job, there's no danger of you doing any damage except maybe give one of your patients a bichloride of mercury tablet instead of an alcohol rub.' He's terrible! But you can't help from laughing.

"There was four of us in the party last night. He brought along his B. F. and another girl. She was just blah, but the B. F. wasn't so bad, only he insisted on me helping him drink a half a bottle of Scotch, and on top of gin, too. I guess I was the life of the party; that is, at first. Afterwards I got sick and it wasn't so good.

"But at first I was certainly going strong. And I guess I made quite a hit with Roy's B. F. He knows Marian, too, but he won't say anything, and if he does, I don't care. If she

don't want to lose her beaus, she ought to know better than to introduce them to all the pretty girls in the world. I don't mean that I'm any Norma Talmadge, but at least—well—but I sure was sick when I *was* sick!

"I must give Marian a ring this noon. I haven't talked to her since the night she introduced me to him. I've been kind of scared. But I've got to find out what she knows. Or if she's sore at me. Though I don't see how she can be, do you? But maybe you want to read."

"I called Marian up, but I didn't get her. She's out of town but she'll be back tonight. She's been out on a case. Hudson, New York, That's where she went. The message was waiting for her when she got home the other night, the night she introduced me to Roy."

"Good morning," said Miss Lyons.

"Good morning," said the man in bed. "Did you sleep enough?"

"Yes," said Miss Lyons. "I mean no, not enough."

"Your eyes look bad. They almost look as if you'd been crying."

"Who? Me? It'd take more than—I mean, I'm not a baby! But go on and read your book."

"Well, good morning," said Miss Lyons. "And how's my patient? And this is the last morning I can call you that, isn't it? I think you're mean to get well so quick and leave me out of a job. I'm just kidding. I'm glad you're all right again, and I can use a little rest myself."

"Another big night?" asked the man in bed.

"Pretty big," said Miss Lyons. "And another one coming. But tomorrow I won't ever get up. Honest, I danced so much last night that I thought my feet would drop off. But he certainly is a dancing fool! And the nicest somebody to talk to that I've met since I came to this town. Not a smart Alex and not always trying to be funny like some people, but just nice. He understands. He seems to know just what you're thinking. George Morse."

"George Morse!" exclaimed the man in bed.

"Why yes," said Miss Lyons. "Do you know him?"

"No. But I thought you were talking about this Stewart, this Roy."

"Oh, him!" said Miss Lyons. "I should say not! He's private property; other people's property, not mine. He's engaged to my G. F. Marian. It happened day before yesterday, after she got home from Hudson. She was on a case up there. She told me about it night before last. I told her congratulations. Because I wouldn't hurt her feelings for the world! But heavens! what a mess she's going to be in, married to that dumb-bell. But of course some people can't be choosey. And I doubt if they ever get married unless some friend loans him the price of a license.

"He's got her believing he's in Wall Street, but I bet if he ever goes there at all, it's to sweep it. He's one of these kind of fellas that's got a great line for a little while, but you don't want to live with a clown. And I'd hate to marry a man that all he thinks about is to step out every night and dance and drink.

"I had a notion to tell her what I really thought. But that'd only of made her sore, or she'd of thought I was jealous or something. As if I couldn't of had him myself! Though even if he wasn't so awful, if I'd liked him instead of loathed him, I wouldn't of taken him from her on account of she being my G. F. And especially while she was out of town.

"He's the kind of a fella that'd marry a nurse in the hopes that some day he'd be an invalid. You know, that kind.

"But say—did you ever hear of J. P. Morgan and Company? That's where my B. F. works, and he don't claim to own it neither. George Morse.

"Haven't you finished that book yet?"

WOMEN

IV

WOMEN

Young Jake uttered a few words which it would pain me to repeat.

"And what are *you* crabbin' about?" asked Mike Healy from his corner of the bench.

"Oh, nothin'!" said Jake. "Nothin' except that I'm sick of it!"

"Sick of what?" demanded Healy.

"Of settin' here!" Jake replied.

"You!" said Mike Healy, with a short laugh. "You've got a fine license to squawk! Why, let's see: what is it? The third of June, and your first June in the league. You ain't even *begin* to sit! Look at me! Been on this bench since catchers started wearin' a mast, or anyway it seems that long. And you never hear me crab, do you, Lefty?"

"Only when you talk," answered the athlete addressed. "And that's only at table or between meals."

"But if this kid's hollerin' already," said

Mike, "what'll he be doin' along in August or September, to say nothin' about next August and the August after that?"

"Don't worry!" said Young Jake. "I'll either be a regular by the end of this season or I won't be on this ball club at all!"

"That-a-boy!" said Healy. "Threaten 'em!"

"I mean what I say!" retorted Jake. "I ain't goin' to spend my life on no bench! I come here to play baseball!"

"Oh, you did!" said Healy. "And what do you think I come here for, to fish?"

"I ain't talkin' about you," said Young Jake. "I'm talkin' about myself."

"That's a novelty in a ball player," remarked Lefty.

"And what I'm sayin'," Jake went on, "is that I'm sick of settin' on this bench."

"This ain't a bad bench," said Healy. "They's a hell of a lot worse places you might sit."

"And a hell of a lot better places!" said Jake. "I can think of one right now. I'm lookin' right at it."

"Where at?"

"Right up in the old stand; the third—no, the fourth row, next to the aisle, the first aisle beyond where the screen leaves off."

"I noticed her myself!" put in Lefty. "Damn cute! Too damn cute for a busher like you to get smoked up over."

"Oh, I don't know!" said Young Jake. "I didn't get along so bad with them dames down South."

"Down South ain't here!" replied Lefty. "Those dames in some of those swamps, they lose their head when they see a man with shoes on. But up here you've got to have something. If you pulled that Calhoun County stuff of yours on a gal like that gal in the stand she'd yell for the dog catcher. She'd——"

"They're all alike!" interrupted Mike Healy. "South, or here, or anywheres, they're all the same, and all poison!"

"What's poison?" asked Jake.

"Women!" said Healy. "And the more you have to do with 'em the better chance you've got of spendin' your life on this bench. Why—— That's pitchin', Joe!" he shouted

when the third of the enemy batters had popped out and left a runner stranded at second base. "You look good in there today," he added to Joe as the big pitcher approached the dugout.

"I'm all right, I guess," said Joe, pulling on his sweater and moving toward the water bottle. "I wished that wind'd die down."

The manager had come in.

"All right! Let's get at 'em!" he said. "Nice work, Joe. Was that a fast one Meusel hit?"

"No," said Joe. "A hook, but it didn't break."

"A couple of runs will beat 'em the way you're going," said the manager, stooping over to select his bat. "Make this fella pitch, boys," he added. "He was hog wild in Philly the other day."

The half inning wore on to its close, and the noncombatants were again left in possession of the bench. Young Jake addressed Healy.

"What's women done to you, Mike?"

"Only broke me. That's all!" said Healy.

"What do you mean, broke you! The boys

tells me you ain't spent nothin' but the summer since you been in the league."

"Oh, I've got a little money," said Healy. "I don't throw it away. I don't go around payin' ten smackers a quart for liquid catnip. But they's more kinds of broke than money broke, a damn sight worse kinds, too. And when I say women has broke me, I mean they've made a bum out of my life; they've wrecked my—what-do-you-call-it?"

"Your career," supplied Lefty.

"Yes, sir," said Healy. "And I ain't kiddin', neither. Why say, listen: Do you know where I'd be if it wasn't for a woman? Right out there in that infield, playin' that old third sack."

"What about Smitty?" asked Young Jake.

"He'd be where I am—on this bench."

"Aw, come on, Mike! Be yourself! You don't claim you're as good as him!" Jake remonstrated.

"I do claim it, but it don't make no difference if I am or I ain't. He shouldn't never ought to of had a chance, not on this club, anyway. You'd say the same if you knowed the facts."

"Well, let's hear 'em."

"It's a long story, and these boys has heard it before."

"That's all right, Mike," said Gephart, a spare catcher. "We ain't listened the last twelve times."

"Well, it was the year I come in this league, four years ago this spring. I'd been with the Toledo club a couple of years. I was the best hitter on the Toledo club. I hit .332 the first year and .354 the next year. And I led the third basemen in fieldin'."

"It would be hard not to," interposed Lefty. "Anything a third baseman don't get they call it a base hit. A third baseman ought to pay to get in the park."

Healy glanced coldly at the speaker, and resumed:

"This club had Johnnie Lambert. He was still about the best third baseman in this league, but he was thirty-five years old and had a bad knee. It had slipped out on him and cost this club the pennant. They didn't have no other third baseman. They lose sixteen out of twenty games. So that learned 'em

a lesson, and they bought me. Their idear was to start Johnnie in the spring, but they didn't expect his knee to hold up. And then it was goin' to be my turn.

"But durin' the winter Johnnie got a hold of some specialist somewheres that fixed his knee, and he come South with a new least of life. He hit good and was as fast as ever on the bases. Meanw'ile I had been on a huntin' trip up in Michigan that winter and froze my dogs, and they ailed me so that I couldn't do myself justice all spring."

"I suppose it was some woman made you go huntin'," said Gephart, but Healy continued without replying:

"They was a gal from a town named Ligonier, Indiana, that had visited in Toledo the second year I played ball there. The people where she was visitin' was great baseball fans, and they brought her out to the game with them, and she got stuck on me."

"Ligonier can't be a town! It must be an asylum!" said Lefty.

"She got stuck on me," Healy repeated, "and the people where she was stayin' asked

me to their house to supper. After supper the man and his wife said how about goin' to the picture show, and the gal said she was tired and rather stay home. So the man and woman excused themselves. They said it was a picture they wanted to see and would I excuse them runnin' off and leavin' we two together. They were clubbin' on me, see?

"Well, I thought to myself, I'll give this dame an unpleasant surprise, so I didn't even hold her hand all evenin'. When I got up to go she says she supposed it would be the last time she seen me as she expected to go back to Ligonier the next day. She didn't have no more intentions of goin' back the next day than crossin' Lake Erie in a hollow tooth. But she knowed if I thought it was good-by I'd kiss her. Well, I knowed it wasn't good-by, but what the hell! So that's how it started, and I went to Ligonier that fall to see her, and we got engaged to be married. At least she seemed to think so."

"Look at that!" interrupted Young Jake, his eyes on the field of action. "What could Sam of been thinkin'!"

"Thinkin'!" said Gephart. "Him!"

"What would Sam do," wondered Lefty, "if they played baseball with only one base? He wouldn't enjoy the game if he couldn't throw to the wrong one."

"That play's liable to cost us somethin'," said Gephart.

"I went up in Michigan on a huntin' trip with some friends of mine," Healy continued. "I froze my feet and was laid up all through January and February and shouldn't of never went South. It was all as I could do to wear shoes, let alone play baseball. I wasn't really myself till along the first of May. But, as I say, Johnnie Lambert had a new least of life and was lookin' better than he'd looked for years. His knee wasn't troublin' him at all.

"Well, that's how things went till around the last part of June. I didn't get no action except five or six times goin' up to hit for somebody. And I was like a young colt, crazy to be let loose. I knowed that if I once got in there and showed what I could do Judge Landis himself couldn't keep me on the bench.

I used to kneel down every night and pray to God to get to work on Lambert's knee.

"The gal kept writin' me letters and I answered 'em once in a w'ile, but we hadn't saw each other since before Christmas. She hinted once or twice about when was we goin' to get married, but I told her I didn't want to even disgust the subject till I was somethin' besides a bench warmer.

"We had a serious in Chi the tail-end of June, and the first night we was there I got a long-distance call from Ligonier. It was the gal's sister, sayin' the gal was sick. She was delirious part of the time and hollerin' for me, and the doctor said if she could see me, it'd probably do her more good than medicine.

"So I said that's all right, but they ain't no off days in the schedule right now and I can't get away. But they had looked up the time table and seen where I could leave Chi after the ball game, spend the night in Ligonier and get back for the game the next day.

"So I took a train from Englewood in the evenin' and when I got off at Ligonier, there was my gal to meet me. She was the picture

of health and no more delirious than usual. They said she had been just about ready to pass out when she learned I was comin' and it cured her. They didn't tell me what disease she'd had, but I suppose it was a grasshopper bite or somethin'.

"When I left next mornin', the weddin' date was set for that fall.

"Somewheres between South Bend and Laporte, the train stopped and liked it so well that we stayed there over three hours. We hit Englewood after four o'clock and I got to the park just in time to see them loadin' Lambert into a machine to take him away. His knee had broke down on him in the first innin's. He ain't never played ball since. And Smitty, who's always been a natural second baseman, he had my job."

"He's filled it pretty good," said Lefty.

"That's either here or there," retorted Healy. "If I'd been around, nobody'd ever knowed if he could play third base or not. And the worst of him is," he added, "that he never gets hurt."

"Maybe you ain't prayed for him like you

done for Lambert," said Young Jake. "What happened to the gal? Did you give her the air?"

"No, I didn't," said Healy. "When I give my word, I keep it. I simply wrote and told her that I'd agreed to marry her and I wouldn't go back on it. But that my feelin's towards her was the same as if she was an advanced case of spinal meningitis. She never answered the letter, so I don't know if we're still engaged or not."

The inning was over and the boys were coming in.

"Joe was lucky to get out of that with only two runs," remarked Lefty. "But of course it was Sam that put him in bad."

"I'm goin' to see if he'll leave me get up on the lines," said Young Jake, "so I can get a better look at that dame."

The manager waited for Sam to catch up.

"What the hell was the matter with you, Sam?" he demanded.

Sam looked silly.

"I thought——"

"That's where you make your mistake!"

the manager broke in. "Tough luck, Joe! But two runs are nothing. We'll get 'em back."

"Shall I go up on the lines?" asked Young Jake, hopefully.

"You? No!" said the manager. "You, Mike," turning to Healy, "go over and coach at third base. You brought us luck yesterday."

So it was Mike who was held partly responsible a few moments later when Smitty, who had tripled, was caught napping off the bag.

"Nice coachin', Mike!" said Lefty, as Healy came back to the bench.

"Why don't he watch hisself!" growled Mike. "And besides, I did yell at him!"

"You're a liar!" said Lefty. "Your back was to the ball game. You were lookin' up in the stand."

"Why would I be lookin' at the stand!" demanded Healy.

But nobody answered him. There was silence for a time. The boys were depressed; in their own language, their dauber was down. Finally Young Jake spoke.

"She's starin' right over this way!" he said.

"Who?" asked Gephart.

"That dame I pointed out. In the tan suit. 'Way over behind third base, the other side of the screen, in the fourth row."

"I see her. Not bad!"

"I'll say she's not bad!" said Jake.

"Women!" said Healy. "You better get your mind on baseball or you'll be back in that silo league, jumpin' from town to town in a w'eelbarrow."

"I don't see why you should be off all women just because one of them brought you a little hard luck."

"She wasn't the only one! Why, say, if it wasn't for women I'd be playin' regular third base for McGraw right now and cuttin' in on the big money every fall."

"I didn't know you was ever with McGraw."

"I wasn't," said Healy, "but I ought to been, and would of been only for a woman. It was when I was playin' with the Dayton club; my first year in baseball. Boy, I was fast as a streak! I was peggin' bunts to first

base before the guy could drop his bat. I covered so much ground to my left that I was always knockin' the shortstop down and bumpin' heads with the right fielder. Everybody was marvelin' at me. Some of the old timers said I reminded them of Bill Bradley at his best, only that I made Bradley look like he was out of the game for a few days.

"Baldy Pierce was umpirin' in our league that year. He wasn't a bad umps, but he never left business interfere with pleasure. Many's the time he called the last fella out in the last innin's when the fella was safer than a hot chocolate at the Elks' convention—just because Baldy was hungry for supper.

"He was so homely that dogs wouldn't live in the same town, and his friends used to try and make him wear his mask off the field as well as on. And yet he grabbed some of the prettiest gals you ever see. He said to me once, he said, 'Mike,' he said, 'you tell me I'm homelier than Railroad Street, but I can cop more pips than you can with all your good looks!'"

At this point there were unprintable com-

ments by Lefty, Gephart, and other occupants of the bench.

"One of these gals of his," Healy went on, "was a gal named Helen Buck from Hamilton, Ohio. She was visitin' in Dayton and come out to the ball game. The first day she was there a lot of the boys was hit in the face by thrown balls, and every time a foul went to the stand the whole infield run in to shag it. But she wouldn't look at nobody but Pierce.

"Well, McGraw had heard about me, and he sent a fella named McDonald, that was scoutin' for him, to look me over. It was in September and we was just about through. How the games come out didn't make no difference, but I knowed this McDonald was there and what he was there for, so I wanted to make a showin'. He had came intendin' to stay two days, but he'd overlooked a skip in the schedule that left us without no game the second day, so he said one game would have to be enough, as he had to go somewheres else.

"We was playin' the Springfield club. I had a good day in the field, but Bill Hutton, who started pitchin' for them, he was hog wild

and walked me the first two times up. The third time they was a man on third and I had to follow orders and squeeze him home. So I hadn't had no chance to really show what I could do up there at the plate.

"Well, we come into the ninth innin's with the score tied and it was gettin' pretty dark. We got two of them out, and then their first baseman, Jansen, he got a base on balls. Bill Boone caught a hold of one just right and cracked it to the fence and it looked like Jansen would score, but he was a slow runner. Davy Shaw, our shortstop, thought he must of scored and when the ball was thrown to him he throwed it to me to get Boone, who was tryin' for three bases.

"Well, I had took in the situation at a glance; I seen that Jansen hadn't scored and if I put the ball on Boone quick enough, why the run wouldn't count. So I lunged at Boone and tagged him before Jansen had crossed the plate. But Pierce said the score counted and that Boone wasn't out because I'd missed him. Missed him! Say, I bet that where I tagged him they had to take stitches!

"Anyway, that give 'em a one run lead, and when the first two fellas got out in our half everybody thought it was over. But Davy Shaw hit one to right center that a man like I could of ran around twice on it, but they held Davy at third base. And it was up to me to bring him in.

"By this time Jim Preston was pitchin' for Springfield, and Jim was always a mark for me. I left the first one go by, as it was outside, but Pierce called it a strike. Then they was a couple of balls that he couldn't call strikes. I cracked the next one over the left-field fence, but it was a few inches foul. That made it two and two, and the next ball he throwed, well, if I hadn't ducked my head just when I did they'd of been brains scattered all over Montgomery County. And what does Pierce do but yell 'Batter out!' and run for the clubhouse!

"Well, I run after him and asked him what the hell, and here is what he said. He said, 'Mike,' he said, 'these games don't mean nothin', but if this here game had of wound up a tie it would of meant a game tomorrow,

when we got a off day. And I made a date for tomorrow to go on a picnic with my little gal in Hamilton. You wouldn't want me to miss that, would you?'"

"Why," inquired Young Jake, "didn't you break his nose or bust him in the chin?"

"His nose was already broke," said Healy, "and he didn't have no chin. I tried to get a hold of McDonald, the fella that was there scoutin' me. I was goin' to explain the thing to him. But he'd left town before I could catch him. It seems, though, that he'd set over to the side where he couldn't see what a lousy strike it was and he told a friend of mine that he couldn't recommend a man that would take a third strike when a base hit would of tied up the game; that on top of me 'missin'' Boone at third——"

Another half inning was over and Healy started for the third-base coaching line without waiting for the manager to reach the bench. His teammates were not in a position to see the glance he threw at a certain spot in the stand as he walked to his "work." When the side was retired scoreless and he had returned

to his corner of the dugout he looked more desolate than ever.

"Women!" he said. "Why, if it wasn't for women I'd be playin' third base for Huggins; I'd have Joe Dugan's job; I'd be livin' right here in the capital of the world."

"How do you make that out?" asked Young Jake.

"It's a long story," said Healy, "but I can tell you in a few words. We was playin' the New York Club out home. Frank Baker had began to slip and Huggins was lookin' for a good young fella to take his place. He was crazy to get me, but he had heard that I didn't want to play in New York. This had came from me kiddin' with some of the boys on the New York Club, tellin' 'em I wouldn't play here if they give me the town. So Huggins wanted to make sure before he started a trade. And he didn't want no one to see him talkin' to me. So he came around one night to the hotel where I was livin' at the time. I was up in my room waitin' for the phone gal to be off duty. She was stuck on me and I had a date to take her for a drive. So when Huggins come

to see me she said I was out. She was afraid her date was goin' to be interfered with. So Huggins went away and his club left town that night."

"What did you do to her?" asked Jake.

"Oh, I couldn't do nothin' to her," said Healy. "She claimed she didn't know who it was."

"Didn't he give his name?"

"No."

"Then how do you know it was Huggins?"

"She said it was a little fella."

"He ain't the only little fella."

"He's the littlest fella I know," said Healy.

"But you ain't sure what he wanted to see you for."

"What *would* Huggins want to see me for—to scratch my back? But as I say, she didn't know who it was, so I couldn't do nothin' to her except ignore her from then on, and they couldn't of been no worse punishment as far as she was concerned."

"All and all," summed up Lefty, "if it wasn't for women, you'd of been playin' third base for McGraw and Huggins and this club, all at the same time."

"Yes," said Healy, "and with Washin'ton, too. Why——"

"Mike Healy!" interrupted the voice of Dick Trude, veteran usher. "Here's a mash note and it wants an answer."

Healy read the note and crumpled it in his hand.

"Who is she?" he asked.

"Look where I point," said Trude. "It's that good-lookin' dame in the tan suit, in the fourth row, back of third base. There! She asked me who you was when you was out there coachin'. So I told her, and she give me that note. She said you could answer yes or no."

"Make it 'yes,'" said Healy, and Trude went away.

Healy threw the crumpled note under the water bottle and addressed Young Jake.

"What I want you to get through your head, boy——"

"Oh, for God's sakes, shut up!" said Young Jake.

A DAY WITH CONRAD GREEN

V

A DAY WITH CONRAD GREEN

Conrad Green woke up depressed and, for a moment, could not think why. Then he remembered. Herman Plant was dead; Herman Plant, who had been his confidential secretary ever since he had begun producing; who had been much more than a secretary—his champion, votary, shield, bodyguard, tool, occasional lackey, and the butt of his heavy jokes and nasty temper. For forty-five dollars a week.

Herman Plant was dead, and this Lewis, recommended by Ezra Peebles, a fellow entrepreneur, had not, yesterday, made a good first impression. Lewis was apparently impervious to hints. You had to tell him things right out, and when he did understand he looked at you as if you were a boob. And insisted on a salary of sixty dollars right at the start. Perhaps Peebles, who, Green knew, hated him almost enough to make it fifty-fifty, was doing him another dirty trick dressed up as a favor.

After ten o'clock, and still Green had not had enough sleep. It had been nearly three when his young wife and he had left the Bryant-Walkers'. Mrs. Green, the former Marjorie Manning of the Vanities chorus, had driven home to Long Island, while he had stayed in the rooms he always kept at the Ambassador.

Marjorie had wanted to leave a good deal earlier; through no lack of effort on her part she had been almost entirely ignored by her aristocratic host and hostess and most of the guests. She had confided to her husband more than once that she was sick of the whole such-and-such bunch of so-and-so's. As far as she was concerned, they could all go to hell and stay there! But Green had been rushed by the pretty and stage-struck Joyce Brainard, wife of the international polo star, and had successfully combated his own wife's importunities till the Brainards themselves had gone.

Yes, he could have used a little more sleep, but the memory of the party cheered him. Mrs. Brainard, excited by his theatrical aura and several highballs, had been almost affec-

tionate. She had promised to come to his office some time and talk over a stage career which both knew was impossible so long as Brainard lived. But, best of all, Mr. and Mrs. Green would be listed in the papers as among those present at the Bryant-Walkers', along with the Vanderbecks, the Suttons, and the Schuylers, and that would just about be the death of Peebles and other social sycophants of "show business." He would order all the papers now and look for his name. No; he was late and must get to his office. No telling what a mess things were in without Herman Plant. And, by the way, he mustn't forget Plant's funeral this afternoon.

He bathed, telephoned for his breakfast, and his favorite barber, dressed in a symphony of purple and gray, and set out for Broadway, pretending not to hear the "There's Conrad Green!" spoken in awed tones by two flappers and a Westchester realtor whom he passed en route.

Green let himself into his private office, an office of luxurious, exotic furnishings, its walls adorned with expensive landscapes and a

Zuloaga portrait of his wife. He took off his twenty-five dollar velour hat, approved of himself in the large mirror, sat down at his desk, and rang for Miss Jackson.

"All the morning papers," he ordered, "and tell Lewis to come in."

"I'll have to send out for the papers," said Miss Jackson, a tired-looking woman of forty-five or fifty.

"What do you mean, send out? I thought we had an arrangement with that boy to leave them every morning."

"We did. But the boy says he can't leave them any more till we've paid up to date."

"What do we owe?"

"Sixty-five dollars."

"Sixty-five dollars! He's crazy! Haven't you been paying him by the week?"

"No. You told me not to."

"I told you nothing of the kind! Sixty-five dollars! He's trying to rob us!"

"I don't believe so, Mr. Green," said Miss Jackson. "He showed me his book. It's more than thirty weeks since he began, and you know we've never paid him."

"But hell! There isn't sixty-five dollars' worth of newspapers ever been printed! Tell him to sue us! And now send out for the papers and do it quick! After this we'll get them down at the corner every morning and pay for them. Tell Lewis to bring me the mail."

Miss Jackson left him, and presently the new secretary came in. He was a man under thirty, whom one would have taken for a high school teacher rather than a theatrical general's aide-de-camp.

"Good-morning, Mr. Green," he said.

His employer disregarded the greeting.

"Anything in the mail?" he asked.

"Not much of importance. I've already answered most of it. Here are a few things from your clipping bureau and a sort of dunning letter from some jeweler in Philadelphia."

"What did you open that for?" demanded Green, crossly. "Wasn't it marked personal?"

"Look here, Mr. Green," said Lewis quietly: "I was told you had a habit of being rough with your employees. I want to warn you that I am not used to that sort of treatment

and don't intend to get used to it. If you are decent with me, I'll work for you. Otherwise I'll resign."

"I don't know what you're talking about, Lewis. I didn't mean to be rough. It's just my way of speaking. Let's forget it and I'll try not to give you any more cause to complain."

"All right, Mr. Green. You told me to open all your mail except the letters with that one little mark on them——"

"Yes, I know. Now let's have the clippings."

Lewis laid them on the desk.

"I threw away about ten of them that were all the same—the announcement that you had signed Bonnie Blue for next season. There's one there that speaks of a possible partnership between you and Sam Stein——"

"What a nerve he's got, giving out a statement like that. Fine chance of me mixing myself up with a crook like Stein! Peebles says he's a full stepbrother to the James boys. So is Peebles himself, for that matter. What's this long one about?"

"It's about that young composer, Casper Ettelson. It's by Deems Taylor of the *World*. There's just a mention of you down at the bottom."

"Read it to me, will you? I've overstrained my eyes lately."

The dead Herman Plant had first heard of that recent eye strain twenty years ago. It amounted to almost total blindness where words of over two syllables were concerned.

"So far," Lewis read, "Ettelson has not had a book worthy of his imaginative, whimsical music. How we would revel in an Ettelson score with a Barrie libretto and a Conrad Green production."

"Who is this Barrie?" asked Green.

"I suppose it's James M. Barrie," replied Lewis, "the man who wrote Peter Pan."

"I thought that was written by a fella over in England," said Green.

"I guess he does live in England. He was born in Scotland. I don't know where he is now."

"Well, find out if he's in New York, and, if he is, get a hold of him. Maybe he'll do a

couple of scenes for our next show. Come in, Miss Jackson. Oh, the papers!"

Miss Jackson handed them to him and went out. Green turned first to the society page of the *Herald Tribune*. His eye trouble was not so severe as to prevent his finding that page. And he could read his name when it was there to be read.

Three paragraphs were devoted to the Bryant-Walker affair, two of them being lists of names. And Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Green were left out.

"——!" commented Green, and grabbed the other papers. The *World* and *Times* were searched with the same hideous result. And the others did not mention the party at all.

"——!" repeated Green. "I'll get somebody for this!" Then, to Lewis: "Here! Take this telegram. Send it to the managing editors of all the morning papers; you'll find their names pasted on Plant's desk. Now: 'Ask your society editor why my name was not on list of guests at Bryant-Walker dinner Wednesday night. Makes no difference to me,

as am not seeking and do not need publicity, but it looks like conspiracy, and thought you ought to be informed, as have always been good friend of your paper, as well as steady advertiser.' I guess that's enough."

"If you'll pardon a suggestion," said Lewis, "I'm afraid a telegram like this would just be laughed at."

"You send the telegram; I'm not going to have a bunch of cheap reporters make a fool of me!"

"I don't believe you can blame the reporters. There probably weren't reporters there. The list of guests is generally given out by the people who give the party."

"But listen——" Green paused and thought. "All right. Don't send the telegram. But if the Bryant-Walkers are ashamed of me, why the hell did they invite me? I certainly didn't want to go and they weren't under obligations to me. I never——"

As if it had been waiting for its cue, the telephone rang at this instant, and Kate, the switchboard girl, announced that the Bryant-Walkers' secretary was on the wire.

"I am speaking for Mrs. Bryant-Walker," said a female voice. "She is chairman of the committee on entertainment for the Women's Progress Bazaar. The bazaar is to open on the third of next month and wind up on the evening of the fifth with a sort of vaudeville entertainment. She wanted me to ask you——"

Green hung up with an oath.

"That's the answer!" he said. "The damn grafters!"

Miss Jackson came in again.

"Mr. Robert Blair is waiting to see you."

"Who is he?"

"You know. He tried to write some things for one of the shows last year."

"Oh, yes. Say, did you send flowers to Plant's house?"

"I did," replied Miss Jackson. "I sent some beautiful roses."

"How much?"

"Forty-five dollars," said Miss Jackson.

"Forty-five dollars for roses! And the man hated flowers even when he was alive! Well, send in this Blair."

Robert Blair was an ambitious young free

lance who had long been trying to write for the stage, but with little success.

"Sit down, Blair," said Green. "What's on your mind?"

"Well, Mr. Green, my stuff didn't seem to suit you last year, but this time I think I've got a scene that can't miss."

"All right. If you want to leave it here, I'll read it over."

"I haven't written it out. I thought I'd tell you the idea first."

"Well, go ahead, but cut it short; I've got a lot of things to do today. Got to go to old Plant's funeral for one thing."

"I bet you miss him, don't you?" said Blair, sympathetically.

"Miss him! I should say I do! A lovable character and"—with a glance at Lewis—"the best secretary I'll ever have. But let's hear your scene."

"Well," said Blair, "it may not sound like much the way I tell it, but I think it'll work out great. Well, the police get a report that a woman has been murdered in her home, and they go there and find her husband, who is

acting very nervous. They give him the third degree, and he finally breaks down and admits he killed her. They ask him why, and he tells them he is very fond of beans, and on the preceding evening he came home to dinner and asked her what there was to eat, and she told him she had lamb chops, mashed potatoes, spinach, and apple pie. So he says, 'No beans?' and she says, 'No beans.' So he shoots her dead. Of course, the scene between the husband and wife is acted out on the stage. Then——"

"It's no good!" said Conrad Green. "In the first place, it takes too many people, all those policemen and everybody."

"Why, all you need is two policemen and the man and his wife. And wait till I tell you the rest of it."

"I don't like it; it's no good. Come back again when you've got something."

When Blair had gone Green turned to Lewis.

"That's all for just now," he said, "but on your way out tell Miss Jackson to get a hold of Martin and say I want him to drop in here as soon as he can."

"What Martin?" asked Lewis.

"She'll know—Joe Martin, the man that writes most of our librettos."

Alone, Conrad Green crossed the room to his safe, opened it, and took out a box on which was inscribed the name of a Philadelphia jeweler. From the box he removed a beautiful rope of matched pearls and was gazing at them in admiration when Miss Jackson came in; whereupon he hastily replaced them in their case and closed the safe.

"That man is here again," said Miss Jackson, "That man Hawley from *Gay New York*."

"Tell him I'm not in."

"I did, but he says he saw you come in and he's going to wait till you'll talk to him. Really, Mr. Green, I think it would be best in the long run to see him. He's awfully persistent."

"All right; send him in," said Green, impatiently, "though I have no idea what he can possibly want of me."

Mr. Hawley, dapper and eternally smiling, insisted on shaking hands with his unwilling host, who had again sat down at his desk.

"I think," he said, "we've met before."

"Not that I know of," Green replied shortly.

"Well, it makes no difference, but I'm sure you've read our little paper, *Gay New York*."

"No," said Green. "All I have time to read is manuscripts."

"You don't know what you're missing," said Hawley. "It's really a growing paper, with a big New York circulation, and a circulation that is important from your standpoint."

"Are you soliciting subscriptions?" asked Green.

"No. Advertising."

"Well, frankly, Mr. Hawley, I don't believe I need any advertising. I believe that even the advertising I put in the regular daily papers is a waste of money."

"Just the same," said Hawley, "I think you'd be making a mistake not to take a page in *Gay New York*. It's only a matter of fifteen hundred dollars."

"Fifteen hundred dollars! That's a joke! Nobody's going to hold *me* up!"

"Nobody's trying to, Mr. Green. But I

might as well tell you that one of our reporters came in with a story the other day—well, it was about a little gambling affair in which some of the losers sort of forgot to settle, and —well, my partner was all for printing it, but I said I had always felt friendly toward you and why not give you a chance to state your side of it?"

"I don't know what you're talking about. If your reporter has got my name mixed up in a gambling story he's crazy."

"No. He's perfectly sane and very, very careful. We make a specialty of careful reporters and we're always sure of our facts."

Conrad Green was silent for a long, long time. Then he said:

"I tell you, I don't know what gambling business you refer to, and, furthermore, fifteen hundred dollars is a hell of a price for a page in a paper like yours. But still, as you say, you've got the kind of circulation that might do me good. So if you'll cut down the price——"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Green, but we never do that."

"Well, then, of course you'll have to give me a few days to get my ad fixed up. Say you come back here next Monday afternoon."

"That's perfectly satisfactory, Mr. Green." said Hawley, "and I assure you that you're not making a mistake. And now I won't keep you any longer from your work."

He extended his hand, but it was ignored, and he went out, his smile a little broader than when he had come in. Green remained at his desk, staring straight ahead of him and making semi-audible references to certain kinds of dogs as well as personages referred to in the Old and New Testaments. He was interrupted by the entrance of Lewis.

"Mr. Green," said the new secretary, "I have found a check for forty-five dollars, made out to Herman Plant. I imagine it is for his final week's pay. Would you like to have me change it and make it out to his widow?"

"Yes," said Green. "But no; wait a minute. Tear it up and I'll make out my personal check to her and add something to it."

"All right," said Lewis, and left.

"Forty-five dollars' worth of flowers," said

Green to himself, and smiled for the first time that morning.

He looked at his watch and got up and put on his beautiful hat.

"I'm going to lunch," he told Miss Jackson on his way through the outer office. "If Peebles or anybody important calls up, tell them I'll be here all afternoon."

"You're not forgetting Mr. Plant's funeral?"

"Oh, that's right. Well, I'll be here from one-thirty to about three."

A head waiter at the Astor bowed to him obsequiously and escorted him to a table near a window, while the occupants of several other tables gazed at him spellbound and whispered, "Conrad Green."

A luncheon of clams, sweetbreads, spinach, strawberry ice cream, and small coffee seemed to satisfy him. He signed his check and then tipped his own waiter and the head waiter a dollar apiece, the two tips falling just short of the cost of the meal.

Joe Martin, his chief librettist, was waiting when he got back to his office.

"Oh, hello, Joe!" he said, cordially. "Come right inside. I think I've got something for you."

Martin followed him in and sat down without waiting for an invitation. Green seated himself at his desk and drew out his cigarette case.

"Have one, Joe?"

"Not that kind!" said Martin, lighting one of his own. "You've got rotten taste in everything but gals."

"And librettists," replied Green, smiling.

"But here's what I wanted to talk about. I couldn't sleep last night, and I just laid there and an idea came to me for a comedy scene. I'll give you the bare idea and you can work it out. It'll take a girl and one of the comics, maybe Fraser, and a couple of other men that can play.

"Well, the idea is that the comic is married to the girl. In the first place, I'd better mention that the comic is crazy about beans. Well, one night the comic—no, wait a minute. The police get word that the comic's wife has been murdered and two policemen come to

the comic's apartment to investigate. They examine the corpse and find out she's been shot through the head. They ask the comic if he knows who did it and he says no, but they keep after him, and finally he breaks down and admits that he did it himself.

"But he says, 'Gentlemen, if you'll let me explain the circumstances, I don't believe you'll arrest me.' So they tell him to explain, and he says that he came home from work and he was very hungry and he asked his wife what they were going to have for dinner. So she tells him—clams and sweetbreads and spinach and strawberry ice cream and coffee. So he asks her if she isn't going to have any beans and she says no, and he shoots her. What do you think you could do with that idea?"

"Listen, Connie," said Martin: "You've only got half the scene, and you've got that half wrong. In the second place, it was played a whole season in the Music Box and it was written by Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby. Otherwise I can do a whole lot with it."

"Are you sure you're right?"

"I certainly am!"

"Why, that damn little thief! He told me it was his!"

"Who?" asked Martin.

"Why, that Blair, that tried to butt in here last year. I'll fix him!"

"I thought you said it was your own idea."

"Hell, no! Do you think I'd be stealing stuff, especially if it was a year old?"

"Well," said Martin, "when you get another inspiration like this, give me a ring and I'll come around. Now I've got to hurry up to the old Stadium and see what the old Babe does in the first inning."

"I'm sorry, Joe. I thought it was perfectly all right."

"Never mind! You didn't waste much of my time. But after this you'd better leave the ideas to me. So long!"

"Good-by, Joe; and thanks for coming in."

Martin went and Green pressed the button for Miss Jackson.

"Miss Jackson, don't ever let that young Blair in here again. He's a faker!"

"All right, Mr. Green. But don't you think

it's about time you were starting for the funeral? It's twenty minutes of three."

"Yes. But let's see: where is Plant's house?"

"It's up on One Hundred and Sixtieth street, just off Broadway."

"My God! Imagine living there! Wait a minute, Miss Jackson. Send Lewis here."

"Lewis," he said, when the new secretary appeared, "I ate something this noon that disagreed with me. I wanted to go up to Plant's funeral, but I really think it would be dangerous to try it. Will you go up there, let them know who you are, and kind of represent me? Miss Jackson will give you the address."

"Yes, sir," said Lewis, and went out.

Almost immediately the sanctum door opened again and the beautiful Marjorie Green, née Manning, entered unannounced. Green's face registered not altogether pleasant surprise.

"Why, hello, dear!" he said. "I didn't know you were coming to town today."

"I never told you I wasn't," his wife replied.

They exchanged the usual connubial salutations.

"I supposed you noticed," said Mrs. Green, "that our names were not on the list of guests at the party."

"No; I haven't had time to look at the papers. But what's the difference?"

"No difference at all, of course. But do you know what I think? I think we were invited just because those people want to get something out of you, for some benefit or something."

"A fine chance! I hope they try it!"

"However, that's not what I came to talk about."

"Well, dear, what is it?"

"I thought maybe you'd remember something."

"What, honey?"

"Why—oh, well, there's no use talking about it if you've forgotten."

Green's forehead wrinkled in deep thought; then suddenly his face brightened.

"Of course I haven't forgotten! It's your birthday!"

"You just thought of it now!"

"No such a thing! I've been thinking of it for weeks!"

"I don't believe you! If you had been, you'd have said something, and"—his wife was on the verge of tears—"you'd have given me some little thing, just any little thing."

Once more Green frowned, and once more brightened up.

"I'll prove it to you," he said, and walked rapidly to the safe.

In a moment he had placed in her hands the jewel box from Philadelphia. In another moment she had opened it, gasped at the beauty of its contents, and thrown her arms around his neck.

"Oh, dearest!" she cried. "Can you ever forgive me for doubting you?"

She put the pearls to her mouth as if she would eat them.

"But haven't you been terribly extravagant?"

"I don't consider anything too extravagant for you."

"You're the best husband a girl ever had!"

"I'm glad you're pleased," said Green.

"Pleased! I'm overwhelmed. And to think I imagined you'd forgotten! But I'm not going to break up your whole day. I know you want to get out to poor old Plant's funeral. So I'll run along. And maybe you'll take me to dinner somewhere tonight."

"I certainly will! You be at the Ambassador about six-thirty and we'll have a little birthday party. But don't you want to leave the pearls here now?"

"I should say not! They're going to stay with me forever! Anyone that tries to take them will do it over my dead body!"

"Well, good-by, then, dear."

"Till half past six."

Green, alone again, kicked shut the door of his safe and returned to his desk, saying in loud tones things which are not ordinarily considered appropriate to the birthday of a loved one. The hubbub must have been audible to Miss Jackson outside, but perhaps she was accustomed to it. It ceased at another unannounced entrance, that of a girl even more beautiful than the one who had just gone out. She looked at Green and laughed.

"My God! You look happy!" she said.

"Rose!"

"Yes, it's Rose. But what's the matter with you?"

"I've had a bad day."

"But isn't it better now?"

"I didn't think you were coming till tomorrow."

"But aren't you glad I came today?"

"You bet I am!" said Green. "And if you'll come here and kiss me I'll be all the gladder."

"No. Let's get our business transacted first."

"What business?"

"You know perfectly well! Last time I saw you you insisted that I must give up everybody else but you. And I promised you it would be all off between Harry and I if—— Well, you know. There was a little matter of some pearls."

"I meant everything I said."

"Well, where are they?"

"They're all bought and all ready for you. But I bought them in Philadelphia and for

some damn reason they haven't got here yet."

"Got here yet! Were they so heavy you couldn't bring them with you?"

"Honest, dear, they'll be here day after tomorrow at the latest."

"'Honest' is a good word for you to use! Do you think I'm dumb? Or is it that you're so used to lying that you can't help it?"

"If you'll let me explain——"

"Explain hell! We made a bargain and you haven't kept your end of it. And now——"

"But listen——"

"I'll listen to nothing! You know where to reach me and when you've kept your promise you can call me up. Till then—Well, Harry isn't such bad company."

"Wait a minute, Rose!"

"You've heard all I've got to say. Good-by!"

And she was gone before he could intercept her.

Conrad Green sat as if stunned. For fifteen minutes he was so silent and motionless that

one might have thought him dead. Then he shivered as if with cold and said aloud:

"I'm not going to worry about them any more. To hell with all of them!"

He drew the telephone to him and took off the receiver.

"Get me Mrs. Bryant-Walker."

And after a pause:

"Is this Mrs. Bryant-Walker? No, I want to speak to her personally. This is Conrad Green. Oh, hello, Mrs. Walker. Your secretary called me up this morning, but we were cut off. She was saying something about a benefit. Why, yes, certainly, I'll be glad to. As many of them as you want. If you'll just leave it all in my hands I'll guarantee you a pretty good entertainment. It's no bother at all. It's a pleasure. Thank you. Good-by."

Lewis came in.

"Well, Lewis, did you get to the funeral?"

"Yes, Mr. Green, and I saw Mrs. Plant and explained the circumstances to her. She said you had always been very kind to her husband. She said that during the week of his illness he talked of you nearly all the time and

expressed confidence that if he died you would attend his funeral. So she wished you had been there."

"Good God! So do I!" said Conrad Green.

REUNION

VI

REUNION

This is one about a brother and sister and the sister's husband and the brother's wife. The sister's name was Rita Mason Johnston; she was married to Stuart Johnston, whose intimates called him Stu, which was appropriate only on special occasions. The brother was Bob Mason, originally and recently from Buchanan, Michigan, and in between whiles a respected resident of Los Angeles. His wife was a woman he had found in San Bernardino and married for some reason.

Rita had been named after a Philadelphia aunt with money. The flattered aunt had made Rita's mother bring Rita East for a visit when the child was three or four. After that, until she met Stu, she had spent two-thirds of her time with her aunt or at schools of her aunt's choosing. Her brother Bob, in bad health at fourteen, had gone to California

to live with cousins or something. He had visited home only three times in nearly twenty years, and not once while Rita was there. So he and Rita hardly knew each other, you might say.

Johnston and Rita had become acquainted at a party following a Cornell-Pennsylvania football game. Johnston's people were decent and well-off, and Rita's aunt had encouraged the romance, which resulted in a wedding and a comfortable home at Sands Point, Long Island.

Bob Mason had first worked for a cousin in a Los Angeles real estate office, then had gone into business for himself, and finally saved enough to bring his wife to the old Michigan homestead, which had been left him by his father.

He and Jennie were perfectly satisfied with small-town life. Once in a while they visited Chicago, less than a hundred miles away, or drove up the lake shore or down into Indiana in Bob's two-thousand-dollar automobile. In the past year they had been to Chicago three times and had attended three performances

of Abie's Irish Rose. It was the best play ever played; better, even, than Lightnin'.

"I honestly think we ought to do something about Rita," said Jennie to Bob one June day. "Imagine a person not seeing their own sister in nearly twenty years!"

"I'd love to see her," replied Bob, "and I wish you'd write her a letter. She don't pay no attention to mine. I've asked her time and time again to come out here and stay as long as she likes, but she hasn't even answered."

"Well," said Jennie, "I'll write to her, although she still owes me a letter from last Christmas."

"Stu," said Rita to her husband, "we've simply got to do something about Bob and his wife. Heaven knows how many times he's asked us to go out there and visit and now here is a letter from Jennie, inviting us again."

"Well, why don't you go? You'd enjoy it, seeing the old home and the people you used to play around with. I'd go along, but I haven't the time."

"Time! You have time to go to the Water Gap or up to Manchester for golf every two

or three weeks. As for me wanting to see the old home, you know that's silly!"

"Well, we won't argue about it, but I'm certainly not going to waste my vacation in any hick town where they've probably got a six-hole course that you have to putt on with a niblick! Why can't they come here?"

"I don't suppose they could, but if you want me to, I'll ask them."

"Suit yourself. It's your brother."

The Bob Masons boarded The Wolverine at the near-by metropolis of Niles and got off some twenty hours later in New York's Grand Central Station. Compared with the jump from California to Michigan, it seemed like once around on a roller coaster.

Rita met them and identified Bob by the initials on his suitcase. He wouldn't have known her. She was the same age as Jennie, thirty-five, and he had expected her to look it. Instead, she looked ten years younger and was prettier than a member of the Buchanan Mason family had any right to be. And what clothes! Like those of the movie gals who had infested his Los Angeles.

"Why, sis, are you sure it's you?"

"Am I changed?" she said, laughing.

"Not as much as you ought to be," replied Bob. "That's what makes it so hard to recognize you."

"Well, *you've* changed," said Rita. "Let's see—it's twenty years, isn't it? You were fourteen and naturally you didn't have that mustache. But even if you were clean shaven, you wouldn't be a bit like the Bob I remember. And this is Jennie," she added. "Well!"

"Yes," admitted Bob's wife.

She smiled and Rita noticed her teeth for the first time. Most of the visible ones were of gold, and the work had evidently been done by a dentist for whom three members of a foursome were waiting. Rita, Bob, and Bob's wife, escorted by a red cap, walked through the Biltmore and across Forty-third Street to where Gates was parked with Rita's sedan. Gates observed the newcomers as he relieved the red cap of their meager baggage. "Sears, Roebuck," he said to himself, for he had lived in Janesville, Wisconsin.

"Oh, we forgot to see about your trunks!" exclaimed Rita when the car had started.

"We didn't bring no trunks," said Bob.

"We can only stay two weeks," said his wife.

"That seems like an awfully short visit," Rita said.

"I know, but Bob don't feel like he can stay away from the garden this time of year. We left old Jimmy Preston to take care of it, but nobody can be trusted to tend to another person's garden like you would yourself."

"Does the place look just the same?"

"I should say not! It was in terrible condition when he first came East."

"Came East?"

"I mean, to Michigan. But Bob spent—— How much did you spend fixing things up, Bob, about?"

"Over two thousand dollars," said Bob.

"I thought it was nearer twenty-one or twenty-two hundred," said his wife.

"Well, somewhere over two thousand."

"It was more than two thousand," insisted his wife.

"Look out!" yelled Bob, and the two women jumped.

They were on the Fifty-ninth Street bridge and Gates was worming his way through the myriad trucks and funerals that prevail on that structure at 11 A. M.

"What's the matter? You scared me to death!" said Rita.

"I thought we was going to hit that Reo," Bob explained.

"Bob's a nervous wreck when anybody else is driving," apologized Jennie. "I often think a person who drives themselves is more liable to be nervous when somebody else is driving."

"I guess that's true," agreed Rita, and reflected that she had heard this theory expounded before.

"And I do believe," continued Jennie, "that Bob is just about the best driver in the world, and that's not because he's my husband, either."

This remark caused Gates to turn around suddenly and look the speaker in the eye, and the sedan missed another Reo by a flea's upper lip.

The road leading from New York to the towns on Long Island's north shore is, for the most part, as scenically attractive as an incinerating plant. Nevertheless, Jennie kept saying "How beautiful!" and asking Rita who were the owners of various places which looked as if they had been disowned these many years. Bob was too nervous to make any effort to talk and Rita sighed with relief when the drive was over.

"I'll show you your room," she said, "and then you can rest till lunch. Stu is in the city and won't be home till dinner. But he only goes in once or twice a week, and he said he would arrange not to go at all while you're here, so he'd have plenty of time to visit."

Jennie was impressed with the luxurious guest room and its outlook on the Sound, but Bob had slept badly on the train and dozed off while she was still marveling.

"I don't suppose you feel like doing much this afternoon," said Rita when lunch was over. "Maybe we'd better just loaf. I imagine that tomorrow and the rest of the week

will be pretty strenuous. Stu has all kinds of plans."

So they loafed, and Jennie and Rita took naps, and Bob walked around the yard and plotted the changes he would make in it if it were his.

Seven o'clock brought Stu, who was introduced to the in-laws and then ordered to his room to make himself presentable for dinner. Rita followed him upstairs.

"Well?" he said.

"I'm not sure yet," said Rita, "but I'm kind of afraid—— Bob is awfully quiet and I guess she's embarrassed to death. I hope they've brought some other clothes, but then I don't know—— A change might be for the worse, though it doesn't seem possible."

"Does she think," asked Stu, "that just because she's from the Golden State she has to run around with a mouthful of nuggets?"

"She's all right when she doesn't smile. You mustn't say anything what will make her smile."

"That's going to be tough," said Stu. "You know what I am when I get started!"

"And another thing I just thought of," said Rita. "He didn't bring any golf clubs."

"Oh, that doesn't matter. I can fit him out."

The host and hostess joined their guests on the porch. A Swedish girl served cocktails.

"Are these—is it liquor?" asked Jennie.

"Just Bacardi, and they're awfully mild," said Rita.

"But Bob and I don't indulge at all," said Jennie.

"This wouldn't be indulging," urged Stu. "This is practically a soft drink."

"I know, but it would be violating the letter of the law," said Jennie.

So Rita and Stu drank alone and the four moved in to dinner.

"What time do you get up, Bob?" asked the host, at table.

"Six o'clock, in the summer," replied his brother-in-law.

"Oh, well, there's no need of that! But it would be nice if we could get through breakfast tomorrow at, say, nine o'clock. I'm going to take you to Piping Rock. We'll make a day of it."

"That'll be fine," said Bob.

"What do you go around in?" inquired his brother-in-law.

"I've got a 1924 Studebaker," said Bob.

"No, no," said Stu. "I mean your golf game."

"Me? I haven't any golf game. I never played golf in my life."

Stu's expression would have made Rita laugh if she hadn't felt so sorry for him.

"Bob can't see anything in golf," explained Jennie. "He says it's a sissy game. I tell him he ought to try it some time and he might change his mind. Why don't you try it while you're here, Bob? Maybe Stuart would show you the fine points."

The host seemed not to have heard this suggestion.

"They have got a links near Buchanan, between Buchanan and Niles," said Bob, "but they charge fifty dollars to join and thirty-five dollars annual dues. That seems exorbitant."

"It's an outrage!" is what Stu was going to say, but Rita shook her head at him. "I think

you'd find it was worth the money," is what he said.

"Lots of our friends play," said Jennie. "Some of the nicest people in both Niles and Buchanan belong to the club, so it can't be as silly as Bob thinks. But he gets an idear in his head and you can't change him."

"What's on tonight?" asked Stu as the dessert was served.

"Well," said Rita, "I thought these people would want to get to bed early after their trip, so we won't go anywhere. We might have a little bridge. Do you feel like bridge, Jennie?"

"I'm awfully sorry, but neither Bob or I play. I know it must be a wonderful game and some of our best friends play it a great deal, but somehow or other, Bob and I just never took it up."

This was a terrific blow to Rita, who counted that day lost which was without its twenty or thirty rubbers.

"You miss something," she said with remarkable self-control. "Shall we have our coffee on the porch? I think it's pleasanter."

"What do you smoke, Bob? Cigars or cigarettes?" inquired the host.

"Neither, thanks," Bob replied. "I never cared for tobacco."

"You're lucky," said Stu. "A cigarette, Jennie?"

"Mercy! It would kill me! Even the smell of smoke makes me dizzy."

Stu and Rita evidently missed this statement for they proceeded to light their cigarettes.

"Is bridge hard to learn?" asked Jennie presently.

"Not very," said Rita.

"I was wondering if maybe you and Stuart couldn't teach it to Bob and I. Then we could have some games while we're here."

"Well," said Rita, "it's—it's a terribly hard game to learn, that is, to play it right."

"You said it wasn't," put in Bob.

"Well, it isn't, if you don't care—if you just—— But to learn to play it right, it's impossible!"

"Have you got a radio?" asked Bob. He pronounced the "a" short, as in Buchanan.

"I'm sorry to say we haven't," said Stu, who wasn't sorry at all.

"I don't know how you get along without one," said Bob.

"We just live for ours!" said Jennie.

"What is it, an Atwater-Kent?" asked Rita.

She had seen that name in some paper yesterday.

"No," replied Bob. "It's a Ware Neutrodyne, with a Type X receiver."

"And an Ethovox horn," added Jennie. "We had Omaha one night."

"You did!" said Rita.

There was a silence, which was broken by Bob's asking his sister how often she went to New York.

"Only when I can't help myself, when I simply have to get something."

"Don't you never go to the theater?"

"Oh, yes, if it's something especially good."

"Of course," said Jennie, "you've seen Abie's Irish Rose?"

"Heavens, no!" said Rita. "Everybody says it's terrible!"

"Well, it's not terrible!" said Bob indignantly.

"That is, if you've got anywheres near as good a company here as they have in Chicago."

"I'd like to see the New York company," said Jennie, "and see how they do compare."

This met with no encouragement and another silence followed.

"Well, Bob," said Stu at length, "you must do *something* for exercise. How about a little tennis in the morning?"

"That's another game I don't play," Bob replied. "As for exercise, I get plenty of it fooling around the garden and monkeying with the car."

"Then all I can suggest is that we put in the day fishing or swimming or just riding around in the launch."

Bob was silent, but his wife spoke up.

"You know, Stuart, Bob's ashamed to admit it, but being on the water makes him deathly sick, even if it's as smooth as glass. And he can't swim."

Bob didn't seem to relish this topic and turned to his sister.

"Do you remember the Allens in Buchanan, old Tom Allen and his family?"

"Kind of."

"Did you hear about Louise Allen running away and getting married?"

"No."

"Well, she ran away with Doc Marshall and got married. And at first old Tom was pretty near wild, but when Doc and Louise came back, why one day Doc was walking along the street and old Tom came along from the opposite direction and Doc spoke to him and called him by name and old Tom looked at him and asked him what he wanted, and Doc said he wanted to know if he'd forgave him. So old Tom said, 'Forgiven you! Have *you* forgiven *me*, is the question.' So Doc said, forgiven him for what, and old Tom said, for not killing her when she was a baby. This put the laugh on Doc and the boys have all been kidding him about it. I guess you didn't know Doc."

"No, I didn't," admitted Rita.

"Quite a card," said Bob.

Jennie had picked up a book. "May Fair," she read. "Is it good?"

"Yes," said Rita. "It's short stories by

Michael Arlen; you know, the man who wrote The Green Hat."

"A detective story?" asked Bob.

"No, Michael Arlen. He was here last spring and we met him. He's awfully nice. He's really an Armenian."

"There's an Armenian comes to Buchanan two or three times a year," said Jennie. "But he sells linen."

Upstairs, two or three hours later, Stu made a brief speech:

"My God! He doesn't play golf, he doesn't play tennis, he doesn't play bridge, he doesn't swim, fish, drink, or smoke. And I'd arranged these two weeks for a kind of a vacation! Hell's bells!"

In the guest room Bob said:

"I certainly miss the old radio."

"Yes," said Jennie. "We'd be getting the Drake Hotel now."

"I'd like to see the New York company in Abie's Irish Rose," said Jennie at breakfast next morning. "I'd like to compare them with the companies that's in Chicago."

"Did you see it in Chicago?" asked Stu.

"Three times," said Jennie.

"You must be sick of it," said Stu.

"I couldn't get sick of it," replied Jennie, "not if I saw it every night in the year."

After breakfast Bob tried to read the *Herald Tribune*, the *World*, and the *Times*, but couldn't make head or tail of them. He wished he had a copy of the Chi *Trib*, even if it was two or three days old.

"Do you go to pictures much?" inquired Jennie of her hostess.

"Hardly ever," said Rita.

"We're very fond of them," said Jennie. "You know, we lived in Los Angeles for a long time, and that's right near Hollywood. So we often saw different stars in person. And some friends of ours knew Harold Lloyd and introduced us to him. You'd never know him without those glasses. He's really handsome! And democratic!"

"What is he running for?" asked Stu.

"Nothing that I know of," said Jennie. "Is he running for anything, Bob?"

"I don't think so," said Bob.

The morning dragged along and finally it

was time for lunch and Stu broke a precedent by having seven highballs with his meal.

"They'll make you sleepy," warned Rita.

"What of it?" he said, and there seemed to be no answer.

Sure enough, Stu slept on the porch swing all afternoon while Jennie struggled with the first volume of The Peasants and Rita took Bob for a walk.

"Do you remember Tom Allen?" Bob asked her.

"I don't believe so," she answered.

"Oh, you must remember the Allens! They lived next door to the Deans. Well, anyway, Tom had a daughter, Louise, about our age, and she ran away with Doc Marshall and got married. Everybody thought old Tom would shoot Doc on sight, but when they met and Doc asked Tom to forgive him, old Tom said he was the one that ought to be asking forgiveness. So Doc said forgiveness for what, and old Tom said, for not killing Louise when she was a baby."

Near the end of their walk, Bob asked:

"Don't you never go to New York?"

"Hardly ever, and especially at this time of year. It's so hot! But I suppose you and Jennie would like to see something of it. We'll arrange to drive in before you go home."

Stu woke up a little after five and took on a fresh cargo of Scotch before dinner.

"You certainly ought to get a radio!" said Bob as the clock struck nine.

At half past, everybody went to bed.

"This will be our third day here," said Bob, dressing. "We don't start home till a week from next Thursday."

"Yes," said Jennie absently.

"I'd wear my other suit today, but it's all wrinkled up," said Bob.

"I'll ask Rita for an iron and press it out for you. Or maybe we could send it to a tailor."

"Tailor! There's no tailor within miles of here, or anything else as far as I can see!"

Stu wasn't up for breakfast, but joined the party on the porch a little before lunch time. He had started in on a new bottle.

"Bob," he said, "you ought to fall off the

wagon. I've got some of the most able-bodied Scotch on Long Island."

"Thanks," said his brother-in-law. "I may be tempted before long."

It was late in the afternoon when Bob said to Rita:

"Do you remember old Tom Allen?"

"I think so," his sister replied. "Didn't his daughter run away with some doctor?"

"Yes," said Bob, "and——"

He was interrupted by Stu's voice, calling Rita from upstairs.

"Listen," said Stu when she had answered his summons, "A telegram is coming for me tonight, saying that my grandfather is sick up in Bennington, Vermont, or some place, and for me to come at once. And he's going to stay sick for at least ten days, so sick that I can't leave him."

"No, sir!" said Rita firmly. "You don't do that to me!"

"Well, then, how about this? Suppose it's one of our dearest friends that's sick and we've both got to go. Do you think they'd go home? You see, we could pack up some baggage and

run in to New York and stay over night if necessary, and come back here after they're gone."

"If they ever found out, I couldn't forgive myself."

"They won't. You let me plan it and we'll spring it after dinner. I wouldn't be so desperate if I hadn't just got so I could break an eighty-five and if I don't keep after it I'll be back in the nineties."

But after dinner, while Rita and Stu were sparring for an opening, Jennie said:

"Folks, I hope you won't think we are crazy, but Bob is, almost. He's worried to death about his garden. He read in the paper this morning that there's a regular drought threatened all through southern Michigan. We were afraid of it, because it hadn't rained for a long time before we left. And now it looks like everything would be ruined unless he gets back there and tends to things himself. We left old Jimmy Preston to look out for things, but you can't trust things to an outsider. Bob feels like if he was there, he could see that things were taken care of. The garden

will get plenty of water if Bob is there to see to it, but if he isn't, there's no telling what will happen. So if you'll forgive us, we're thinking about starting home on The Wolverine tomorrow afternoon."

"Well!" said Rita.

"Well!" said Stu.

"Of course," said Rita, "you know best, and it would be a shame to have your whole garden spoiled. But it does seem—— But of course we wouldn't dream of urging——"

"We've simply got to go, sis," said Bob. "And another thing: Don't bother about coming in to New York with us. Just send us in your car tomorrow forenoon, say, and we'll have time to look around a little before we catch the train."

. . . . . .

The Masons were in their room at the Biltmore.

"It's eight dollars a day without meals," said Bob, "but we can eat out, some place where it's not expensive, and besides, it's only for a week. Tonight," he went on, "Abie's Irish Rose. Tomorrow morning the top of the

Woolworth Building. Tomorrow afternoon, Coney. Thursday night, Abie again. After that, we'll see."

Jennie laughed nervously.

"I'll be petrified every time we leave the hotel," she said. "Suppose we should meet them on the street!"

"There's no danger of that," said Bob. "Sis never comes to town in summer and Stuart is taking a vacation. What I'm afraid of is that they'll run acrost some article on the weather conditions in the Middle West and see where we've had the rainiest summer since 1902."

RHYTHM

VII

RHYTHM

This story is slightly immoral, but so, I guess, are all stories based on truth. It concerns, principally, Harry Hart, whose frankness and naturalness were the traits that endeared him to fellow members of the Friars' Club and all red-blooded she-girls who met him in and out of show business. Music writers have never been noted for self-loathing and Harry was a refreshing exception to the general run. That was before "Upsy Daisy" began its year's tenancy of the Casino.

You can judge what sort of person he was by listening in on a talk he had at the club one night with Sam Rose, lyricist of "Nora's Nightie," "Sheila's Shirt" and a hundred popular songs. They were sitting alone at the table nearest the senile piano.

"Sam," said Harry, "I was wondering if they's a chance of you and I getting together."

"What's happened to Kane?" asked Sam.

"It's off between he and I," Harry replied. "That dame ruined him. I guess she married him to make an honest man of him. Anyways, he got so honest that I couldn't stand it no more. You know how I am, Sam—live and let live. I don't question nobody's ethics or whatever you call them, as long as they don't question mine. We're all trying to get along; that's the way I look at it. At that, I've heard better lyrics than he wrote for those two rhythm numbers of mine in 'Lottie'; in fact, between you and I, I thought he made a bum out of those two numbers. They sold like hymns, so I was really able to bear up when we reached the parting of the ways.

"But I'll tell you the climax just to show you how silly a guy can get. You remember our 'Yes, Yes, Eulalie.' Well, they was a spot for a swell love duet near the end of the first act and I had a tune for it that was a smash. You know I'm not bragging when I say that; I don't claim it as my tune, but it was and is a smash. I mean the 'Catch Me' number."

"I'll say it's a smash!" agreed Sam.

"But a smash in spite of the words," said Harry.

"You're right," said Sam.

"Well, the first time I played this tune for him, he went nuts over it and I gave him a lead sheet and he showed it to his wife. It seems she plays piano a little and she played this melody and she told him I had stole it from some opera; she thought it was 'Giocon-da,' but she wasn't sure. So the next day Kane spoke to me about it and I told him it wasn't 'Gioconda'; it was Donizetti's 'Linda di Chamounix.' Well, he said he didn't feel like it was right to work on a melody that had been swiped from somewhere. So I said, 'Ain't it kind of late for you to be having all those scruples?' So he said, 'Maybe it is, but better late than never.' So I said, 'Listen, Benny—this is your wife talking, not you.' And he said, 'Let's leave her out of this,' and I said, 'I wished to heaven we could.'

"I said, 'Benny, you'll admit that's a pretty melody,' and he said yes, he admitted it. So I said: 'Well, how many of the dumb-bells that goes to our shows has ever heard "Linda di

Chamounix" or ever will hear it? When I put this melody in our troupe I'm doing a million people a favor; I'm giving them a chance to hear a beautiful piece of music that they wouldn't never hear otherwise. Not only that, but they'll hear it at its best because I've improved it.' So Benny said, 'The first four bars is exactly the same and that's where people will notice.'

"So then I said: 'Now listen here, Benny—up to the present you haven't never criticized my music and I haven't criticized your lyrics. But now you say I'm a tune thief. I don't deny it, but if I wasn't, you'd of had a sweet time making a living for yourself, let alone get married. However, laying that to one side, I was over to my sister's house the other night and she had a soprano singer there and she sung a song something about "I love you, I love you; 'tis all my heart can say." It was a mighty pretty song and it come out about twenty or thirty years ago.'

"So then Benny said, 'What of it?' So I said, 'Just this: I can recall four or five lyrics of yours where "I love you" comes in and I

bet you've used the words "heart" and "say" and "all" at least twice apiece during your remarkable career as a song writer. Well, did you make those words up or did you hear them somewhere?' That's what I said to him and of course he was stopped. But his ethics was ravaged just the same and it was understood we'd split up right after 'Eulalie.' And as I say, his words wasn't no help to my Donizetti number; they'd of slayed it if it could of been slayed."

"Well?" said Sam.

"Well," said Harry, "Conrad Green wired me yesterday to come and see him, so I was up there today. He's so dumb that he thinks I'm better than Friml. And he's got a book by Jack Prendergast that he wanted Kane and I to work on. So I told him I wouldn't work with Kane and he said to get who I wanted. So that's why I gave you a ring."

"It sounds good to me," said Sam. "How is the book?"

"I only skimmed it through, but I guess it's all right. It's based on 'Cinderella,' so what with that idear combined with your lyrics and

my tunes, it looks like we ought to give the public a novelty at least."

"Have you got any new tunes?"

"New?" Hart laughed. "I'm dirty with them." He sat down at the piano. "Get this rhythm number. If it ain't a smash, I'm Gatti-Casazza!"

He played it, beautifully, first in F sharp—a catchy refrain that seemed to be waltz time in the right hand and two-four in the left.

"It's pretty down here, too," he said, and played it again, just as surely, in B natural, a key whose mere mention is henbane to the average pianist.

"A wow!" enthused Sam Rose. "What is it?"

"Don't you know?"

"The Volga boat song."

"No," said Hart. "It's part of Aïda's number when she finds out the fella is going to war. And nobody that comes to our shows will spot it except maybe Deems Taylor and Alma Gluck."

"It's so pretty," said Sam, "that it's a wonder it never goes popular."

"The answer is that Verdi didn't know rhythm!" said Hart.

Or go back and observe our hero at the Bucks' house on Long Island. Several of the boys and girls were there and thrilled to hear that Harry Hart was coming. He hardly had time to taste his first cocktail before they were after him to play something.

"Something of your own!" pleaded the enraptured Helen Morse.

"If you mean something I made up," he replied with engaging frankness, "why, that's impossible; not exactly impossible, but it would be the homeliest tune you ever listened to. However, my name is signed to some mighty pretty things and I'll play you one or two of those."

Thus, without the conventional show of reluctance, Harry played the two "rhythm numbers" and the love-song that were making Conrad Green's "Upsy Daisy" the hit of the season. And he was starting in on another, a thing his informal audience did not recognize, when he overheard his hostess introducing somebody to Mr. Rudolph Friml.

"Good night!" exclaimed Hart. "Let somebody play that can play!" And he resigned his seat at the piano to the newcomer and moved to a far corner of the room.

"I hope Friml didn't hear me," he confided to a Miss Silloh. "I was playing a thing he wrote himself and letting you people believe it was mine."

Or catch him in the old days at a football game with Rita Marlowe of Goldwyn. One of the college bands was playing "Yes, Sir! That's My Baby!"

"Walter Donaldson. There's the boy that can write the hits!" said Hart.

"Just as if you couldn't!" said his companion.

"I don't class with him," replied her modest escort.

Later on, Rita remarked that he must have been recognized by people in the crowd. Many had stared.

"Let's not kid ourselves, girlie," he said. "They're staring at you, not me."

Still later, on the way home from the game, he told her he had saved over $25,000 and

expected to average at least $40,000 a year income while his vogue lasted.

"I'm good as long as I don't run out of pretty tunes," he said, "and they's no reason why I should with all those old masters to draw from. I'm telling you my financial status because—well, I guess you know why."

Rita did know, and it was the general opinion, shared by the two principals, that she and Harry were engaged.

When "Upsy Daisy" had been running two months and its hit numbers were being sung, played, and whistled almost to cloyment, Hart was discovered by Spencer Deal. That he was the pioneer in a new American jazz, that his rhythms would revolutionize our music—these things and many more were set forth by Deal in a four-thousand-word article called "Harry Hart, Harbinger," printed by the erudite Webster's Weekly. And Harry ate it up, though some of the words nearly choked him.

Interesting people were wont to grace Peggy Leech's drawing-room on Sunday afternoons. Max Reinhardt had been there. Reinald

Werrenrath had been there. So had Heifetz and Jeritza and Michael Arlen, and Noel Coward and Dudley Malone. And Charlie Chaplin, and Gene Tunney. In fact, Peggy's Sunday afternoons could be spoken of as salons and her apartment as a hotbed of culture.

It was to Peggy's that Spencer Deal escorted Hart a few weeks after the appearance of the article in Webster's. Deal, in presenting him, announced that he was at work on a "blue" symphony that would make George Gershwin's ultra rhythms and near dissonants sound like the doxology. "Oh!" exclaimed pretty Myra Hampton. "Will he play some of it for us?"

"Play, play, play!" said Hart querulously. "Don't you think I ever want a rest! Last night it was a party at Broun's and they kept after me and wouldn't take 'No' and finally I played just as rotten as I could, to learn them a lesson. But they didn't even know it was rotten. What do you do for a living?"

"I'm an actress," confessed the embarrassed young lady.

"Well, would you like it if, every time you went anywhere socially, people asked you to act?"

"Yes," she answered, but he had moved away.

He seemed to be seeking seclusion; sat down as far as possible from the crowd and looked hurt. He accepted a highball proffered by his hostess, but neglected to thank her. Not a bit discouraged, she brought him Signor Parelli of the Metropolitan.

"Mr. Hart," she said, "this is Mr. Parelli, one of the Metropolitan's conductors."

"Yay?" said Hart.

"Perhaps some day Mr. Parelli will conduct one of your operas."

"I hope so," said the polite Parelli.

"Do you?" said Hart. "Well, if I ever write an opera, I'll conduct it myself, or at least I won't take no chance of having it ruined by a foreigner."

The late war increased people's capacity for punishment and in about twenty minutes Peggy's guests began to act as if they would live in spite of Harry's refusal to perform. In

fact, one of them, Roy Lattimer, full of Scotch courage and not so full of musical ability, went to the piano himself and began to play.

"Began" is all, for he had not completed four bars before Hart plunged across the room and jostled him off the bench.

"I hope you don't call yourself a pianist!" he said, pronouncing it as if it meant a cultivator of, or dealer in, peonies. And for two hours, during which everybody but Spencer Deal and the unfortunate hostess walked out on him, Harry played and played and played. Nor in all that time did he play anything by Kern, Gershwin, Stephen Jones, or Isham Jones, Samuels, Youmans, Friml, Stamper, Tours, Berlin, Tierney, Hubbell, Hein, or Gitz-Rice.

It was during this epoch that Harry had occasion one day to walk up Fifth Avenue from Forty-fifth Street to the Plaza. He noticed that almost everyone he passed on the line of march gazed at him intently. He recalled that his picture had been in two roto-

gravure sections the previous Sunday. It must have been a better likeness than he had thought.

New York was burning soft coal that winter and when Hart arrived in the Plaza wash-room he discovered a smudge on the left side of his upper lip. It made him look as if he had had a mustache, had decided to get it removed and then had changed his mind when the barber was half through.

Harry's date at the Plaza was with Rita Marlowe. He had put it off as long as he could. If the girl had any pride or sense, she'd have taken a hint. Why should he waste his time on a second-rate picture actress when he was hobnobbing with women like Elinor Deal and Thelma Warren and was promised an introduction to Mrs. Wallace Gerard? Girls ought to know that when a fella who has been taking them out three and four times a week and giving them a ring every morning, night and noon between whiles—they ought to know that when a fella stops calling them up and taking them out and won't even talk to them when they call up, there is only one

possible answer. Yet this dame insists on you meeting her and probably having a scene. Well, she'll get a scene. No, she won't. No use being brutal. Just make it apparent in a nice way that things ain't like they used to be and get it over as quick as possible.

"Where can we go?" asked Rita. "I mean, to talk."

"Nowheres that'll take much time," said Harry. "I've got a date with Paul Whiteman to look over part of my symphony."

"I don't want to interrupt your work," said Rita. "Maybe it would be better if you came up to the house tonight."

"I can't tonight," he told her.

"When can you?"

"I'll give you a ring. It's hard to get away. You see——"

"I think I do," said Rita, and left him.

"About time," said Harry to himself.

His symphony went over fairly "big." The critics seemed less impressed than with the modern compositions of Gershwin and Deems Taylor. "But then," Harry reflected, "Gersh-

win was ahead of me and of course Taylor has friends on the paper."

A party instigated by Spencer Deal followed the concert and Harry met Mrs. Wallace Gerard, who took a great interest in young composers and had been known to give them substantial aid. Hart accepted an invitation to play to her at her Park Avenue apartment. He made the mistake of thinking she wanted to be petted, not played to, and his first visit was his last.

He had been engaged by Conrad Green to do the music for a new show, with a book by Guy Bolton. He balked at working again with Sam Rose, whose lyrics were hopelessly proletarian. Green told him to pick his own lyricist and Harry chose Spencer Deal. The result of the collaboration was a score that required a new signature at the beginning of each bar, and a collection of six-syllable rhymes that has as much chance of being unriddled, let alone sung, by chorus girls as a pandect on biotaxy by Ernest Boyd.

"Terrible!" was Green's comment on advice of his musical adviser, Frank Tours.

"You're a fine judge!" said Hart. "But it don't make no difference what you think. Our contract with you is to write music and lyrics for this show and that's what we've done. If you don't like it, you can talk to my lawyer."

"Your lawyer is probably one of mine, too," replied Green. "He must be if he practises in New York. But that is neither here or there. If you think you can compel me to accept a score which Tours tells me that if it was orchestrated, Stokowski himself couldn't even read the triangle part, to say nothing of lyrics which you would have to ring up every night at seven o'clock to get the words in the opening chorus all pronounced in time for Bayside people to catch the one-twenty train—well, Hart, go along home now, because you and I are going to see each other in court every day for the next forty years."

A year or so later, Harry's total cash on hand and in bank amounted to $214.60, including the $56 he had cleaned up on the sale of sheet music and mechanical records of his symphony. He read in the Sunday papers that

Otto Harbach had undertaken a book for Willis Merwin and the latter was looking around for a composer. Merwin was one of the younger producers and had been a pal of Harry's at the Friars'. Hart sought him there. He found Merwin and came to the point at once.

"It's too late," said the young entrepreneur. "I did consider you at first, but—well, I didn't think you were interested now in anything short of oratorio. The stuff you used to write would have been great, but this piece couldn't stand the ponderous junk you've been turning out lately. It needs light treatment and I've signed Donaldson and Gus Kahn."

"Maybe I could interpolate——" Harry began.

"I don't believe so," Merwin interrupted. "I don't recall a spot where we could use either a fugue or a dirge."

On his way out, Hart saw Benny Kane, his collaborator of other years. Benny made as if to get up and greet him, but changed his mind and sank back in his sequestered chair.

"He don't look as cocky as he used to," thought Harry, and wished that Kane had been more cordial. "What I'll have to do is turn out a hit song, just to tide me over. Of course I can write the words myself, but Benny had good idears once in a while."

Hart stopped in at his old publishers' where, in the halcyon days, he had been as welcome as more beer at the Pastry Cooks' Ball. He had left them for a more esthetic firm at the suggestion of Spencer Deal.

"Well, Harry," said Max Wise, one of the partners, "you're quite a stranger. We don't hear much of you lately."

"Maybe you will again," said Hart. "What would you say if I was to write another smash?"

"I'd say," replied Wise, "that it wasn't any too soon."

"How would you like to have me back here?"

"With a smash, yes. Go get one and you'll find the door wide open. Who are you working with?"

"I haven't nobody."

"You could do a lot worse," said Wise, "than team up again with Benny Kane. You and him parting company was like separating Baltimore and Ohio or pork and beans."

"He hasn't done nothing since he left me," said Hart.

"No," replied Wise, "but you can't hardly claim to have been glutting the country with sensations yourself!"

Hart went back to his hotel and wished there was no such thing as pride. He'd like to give Benny a ring.

He answered the telephone and recognized Benny's voice.

"I seen you at the Friars' today," said Benny, "and it reminded me of an idear. Where could we get together?"

"At the club," Harry replied. "I'll be there in a half-hour."

"I was thinking," said Benny, when they were seated at the table near the piano, "that nobody has wrote a rhythm song lately about 'I love you'; that is, not in the last two or three months. And one time you was telling me about being over to your sister's and they

was a soprano there that sung a song that went 'I love you, I love you; 'tis all my heart can say.'"

"What of it?"

"Well," said Benny, "let's take that song and I'll just fix up the words a little and you can take the tune and put it into your rhythm and we're all set. That is, if the tune's o. k. What is it like?"

"Oh, 'Arcady' and 'Marcheta' and maybe that 'Buzz Around' song of Dave Stamper's. But then, what ain't?"

"Well, let's go to it."

"Where is your ethics?"

"Listen," said Benny Kane—"I and Rae was talking this afternoon, and we didn't disgust ethics. She was just saying she thought that all God's children had shoes except her."

"All right," said Hart. "I can remember enough of the tune. But I'll look the song up tomorrow and give it to you and you can rewrite the words."

"Fine! And now how about putting on the feed bag?"

"No," said Harry. "I promised to call up a dame."

Whereupon he kept his ancient promise.

"You've got a lot of nerve," said Rita at the other end of the wire, "imagining a girl would wait for you this long. And I'd say 'No' and say it good and loud, except that my piano has just been tuned and you've never played me your symphony."

"I ain't going to, neither," said Harry. "But I want to try out a new rhythm number that ought to be a smash. It starts off 'I love you, I love you.'"

"It sounds wonderful!" said Rita.

MR. AND MRS. FIX-IT

VIII

MR. AND MRS. FIX-IT

They're certainly a live bunch in this town. We ain't only been here three days and had calls already from people representin' four different organizations—the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, and I forget who else. They wanted to know if we was comfortable and did we like the town and is they anything they can do for us and what to be sure and see.

And they all asked how we happened to come here instead of goin' somewheres else. I guess they keep a record of everybody's reasons for comin' so as they can get a line on what features tourists is most attracted by. Then they play up them features in next year's booster advertisin'.

Well, I told them we was perfectly comfortable and we like the town fine and they's nothin' nobody can do for us right now and we'll be sure and see all the things we ought to see. But when they asked me how did we hap-

pen to come here, I said it was just a kind of a accident, because the real reason makes too long a story.

My wife has been kiddin' me about my friends ever since we was married. She says that judgin' by the ones I've introduced her to, they ain't nobody in the world got a rummier bunch of friends than me. I'll admit that the most of them ain't, well, what you might call hot; they're different somehow than when I first hung around with them. They seem to be lost without a brass rail to rest their dogs on. But of course they're old friends and I can't give 'em the air.

We have 'em to the house for dinner every little w'ile, they and their wives, and what my missus objects to is because they don't none of them play bridge or mah jong or do cross-word puzzles or sing or dance or even talk, but just set there and wait for somebody to pour 'em a fresh drink.

As I say, my wife kids me about 'em and they ain't really nothin' I can offer in their defense. That don't mean, though, that the shoe is all on one foot. Because w'ile the ma-

jority of her friends may not be quite as dumb as mine, just the same they's a few she's picked out who I'd of had to be under the ether to allow anybody to introduce 'em to me in the first place.

Like the Crandalls, for instance. Mrs. Crandall come from my wife's home town and they didn't hardly know each other there, but they met again in a store in Chi and it went from bad to worse till finally Ada asked the dame and her husband to the house.

Well, the husband turns out to be the fella that win the war, w'ile it seems that Mrs. Crandall was in Atlantic City once and some movin' picture company was makin' a picture there and they took a scene of what was supposed to be society people walkin' up and down the Boardwalk and Mrs. Crandall was in the picture and people that seen it when it come out, they all said that from the way she screened, why if she wanted to go into the business, she could make Gloria Swanson look like Mrs. Gump.

Now it ain't only took me a few words to tell you these things, but when the Crandalls

tells their story themselves, they don't hardly get started by midnight and no chance of them goin' home till they're through even when you drop 'em a hint that they're springin' it on you for the hundred and twelfth time.

That's the Crandalls, and another of the wife's friends is the Thayers. Thayer is what you might call a all-around handy man. He can mimic pretty near all the birds and beasts and fishes, he can yodel, he can play a ocarena, or he can recite Kipling or Robert H. Service, or he can do card tricks, and strike a light without no matches, and tie all the different knots.

And besides that, he can make a complete radio outfit and set it up, and take pictures as good as the best professional photographers and a whole lot better. He collects autographs. And he never had a sick day in his life.

Mrs. Thayer gets a headache playin' bridge, so it's mah jong or rhum when she's around. She used to be a teacher of elocution and she still gives readin's if you coax her, or if you don't, and her hair is such a awful nuisance

that she would get it cut in a minute only all her friends tells her it would be criminal to spoil that head of hair. And when she talks to her husband, she always talks baby talk, maybe because somebody has told her that she'd be single if he wasn't childish.

And then Ada has got still another pal, a dame named Peggy Flood who is hospital mad and ain't happy unless she is just goin' under the knife or just been there. She's had everything removed that the doctors knew the name of and now they're probin' her for new giblets.

Well, I wouldn't mind if they cut her up into alphabet soup if they'd only do such a good job of it that they couldn't put her together again, but she always comes through O. K. and she spends the intermissions at our place, describin' what all they done or what they're plannin' to do next.

But the cat's nightgown is Tom Stevens and his wife. There's the team that wins the Olympics! And they're Ada's team, not mine.

Ada met Belle Stevens on the elevated. Ada was invited to a party out on the North

Side and didn't know exactly where to get off and Mrs. Stevens seen her talkin' to the guard and horned in and asked her what was it she wanted to know and Ada told her, and Mrs. Stevens said she was goin' to get off the same station Ada wanted to get off, so they got off together.

Mrs. Stevens insisted on goin' right along to the address where Ada was goin' because she said Ada was bound to get lost if she wasn't familiar with the neighborhood.

Well, Ada thought it was mighty nice of her to do so much for a stranger. Mrs. Stevens said she was glad to because she didn't know what would of happened to her lots of times if strangers hadn't been nice and helped her out.

She asked Ada where she lived and Ada told her on the South Side and Mrs. Stevens said she was sure we'd like it better on the North Side if we'd leave her pick out a place for us, so Ada told her we had a year's lease that we had just signed and couldn't break it, so then Mrs. Stevens said her husband had studied law and he claimed they wasn't no

lease that you couldn't break and some evening she would bring him out to call on us and he'd tell us how to break our lease.

Well, Ada had to say sure, come on out, though we was perfectly satisfied with our apartment and didn't no more want to break the lease than each other's jaw. Maybe not as much. Anyway, the very next night, they showed up, Belle and Tom, and when they'd gone, I give 'em the nickname—Mr. and Mrs. Fix-It.

After the introductions, Stevens made some remark about what a cozy little place we had and then he asked if I would mind tellin' what rent we paid. So I told him a hundred and a quarter a month. So he said, of course, that was too much and no wonder we wanted to break the lease. Then I said we was satisfied and didn't want to break it and he said I must be kiddin' and if I would show him the lease he would see what loopholes they was in it.

Well, the lease was right there in a drawer in the table, but I told him it was in my safety deposit box at the bank. I ain't got no safety

deposit box and no more use for one than Judge Landis has for the deef and dumb alphabet.

Stevens said the lease was probably just a regular lease and if it was, they wouldn't be no trouble gettin' out of it, and meanw'ile him and his wife would see if they couldn't find us a place in the same buildin' with them.

And he was pretty sure they could even if the owner had to give some other tenant the air, because he, the owner, would do anything in the world for Stevens.

So I said yes, but suppose we want to stay where we are. So he said I looked like a man with better judgment than that and if I would just leave everything to him he would fix it so's we could move within a month. I kind of laughed and thought that would be the end of it.

He wanted to see the whole apartment so I showed him around and when we come to the bathroom he noticed my safety razor on the shelf. He said, "So you use one of them things," and I said, "Yes," and he asked me

how I liked it, and I said I liked it fine and he said that must be because I hadn't never used a regular razor.

He said a regular razor was the only thing to use if a man wanted to look good. So I asked him if he used a regular razor and he said he did, so I said, "Well, if you look good, I don't want to."

But that didn't stop him and he said if I would meet him downtown the next day he would take me to the place where he bought all his razors and help me pick some out for myself. I told him I was goin' to be tied up, so just to give me the name and address of the place and I would drop in there when I had time.

But, no, that wouldn't do; he'd have to go along with me and introduce me to the proprietor because the proprietor was a great pal of his and would do anything in the world for him, and if the proprietor vouched for the razors, I could be sure I was gettin' the best razors money could buy. I told him again that I was goin' to be tied up and I managed to get him on some other subject.

Meanw'ile, Mrs. Stevens wanted to know where Ada had bought the dress she was wearin' and how much had it cost and Ada told her and Mrs. Stevens said it was a crime. She would meet Ada downtown tomorrow morning and take her to the shop where she bought her clothes and help her choose some dresses that really was dresses.

So Ada told her she didn't have no money to spend on dresses right then, and besides, the shop Mrs. Stevens mentioned was too high priced. But it seems the dame that run the shop was just like a sister to Mrs. Stevens and give her and her friends a big reduction and not only that, but they wasn't no hurry about payin'.

Well, Ada thanked her just the same, but didn't need nothin' new just at present; maybe later on she would take advantage of Mrs. Stevens's kind offer. Yes, but right now they was some models in stock that would be just beautiful on Ada and they might be gone later on. They was nothin' for it but Ada had to make a date with her; she wasn't obliged to buy nothin', but it would be silly not to go

and look at the stuff that was in the joint and get acquainted with the dame that run it.

Well, Ada kept the date and bought three dresses she didn't want and they's only one of them she's had the nerve to wear. They cost her a hundred dollars a smash and I'd hate to think what the price would of been if Mrs. Stevens and the owner of the shop wasn't so much like sisters.

I was sure I hadn't made no date with Stevens, but just the same he called me up the next night to ask why I hadn't met him. And a couple of days later I got three new razors in the mail along with a bill and a note from the store sayin' that these was three specially fine razors that had been picked out for me by Thomas J. Stevens.

I don't know yet why I paid for the razors and kept 'em. I ain't used 'em and never intended to. Though I've been tempted a few times to test their edge on Stevens's neck.

That same week, Mrs. Stevens called up and asked us to spend Sunday with them and when we got out there, the owner of the buildin' is there, too. And Stevens has told him that

I was goin' to give up my apartment on the South Side and wanted him to show me what he had.

I thought this was a little too strong and I said Stevens must of misunderstood me, that I hadn't no fault to find with the place I was in and wasn't plannin' to move, not for a year anyway. You can bet this didn't make no hit with the guy, who was just there on Stevens's say-so that I was a prospective tenant.

Well, it was only about two months ago that this cute little couple come into our life, but I'll bet we seen 'em twenty times at least. They was always invitin' us to their place or invitin' themselves to our place and Ada is one of these here kind of people that just can't say no. Which may be why I and her is married.

Anyway, it begin to seem like us and the Stevenses was livin' together and all one family, with them at the head of it. I never in my life seen anybody as crazy to run other people's business. Honest to heavens, it's a wonder they let us brush our own teeth!

Ada made the remark one night that she

wished the ski jumper who was doin' our cookin' would get married and quit so's she wouldn't have to can her. Mrs. Stevens was there and asked Ada if she should try and get her a new cook, but Ada says no, the poor gal might have trouble findin' another job and she felt sorry for her.

Just the same, the next afternoon a Jap come to the apartment and said he was ready to go to work and Mrs. Stevens had sent him. Ada had to tell him the place was already filled.

Another night, Ada complained that her feet was tired. Belle said her feet used to get tired, too, till a friend of hers recommended a chiropodist and she went to him and he done her so much good that she made a regular appointment with him for once every month and paid him a flat sum and no matter how much runnin' around she done, her dogs hadn't fretted her once since this cornhusker started tendin' to 'em.

She wanted to call up the guy at his home right then and there and make a date for Ada and the only way Ada could stop her was by promisin' to go and see him the next time her

feet hurt. After that, whenever the two gals met, Belle's first question was "How is your feet?" and the answer was always "Fine, thanks."

Well, I'm quite a football fan and Ada likes to go, too, when it's a big game and lots of excitement. So we decided we'd see the Illinois-Chicago game and have a look at this "Red" Grange. I warned Ada to not say nothin' about it to Tom and Belle as I felt like we was entitled to a day off.

But it happened that they was goin' to be a game up at Evanston that day and the Stevenses invited us to see that one with them. So we used the other game as a alibi. And when Tom asked me later on if I'd boughten my tickets yet, instead of sayin' yes, I told him the truth and said no.

So then he said:

"I'm glad you ain't, because I and Belle has made up our mind that the Chicago game is the one we ought to see. And we'll all go together. And don't you bother about tickets because I can get better ones than you can as Stagg and I is just like that."

So I left it to him to get the tickets and we

might as well of set on the Adams Street bridge. I said to Stevens, I said:

"If these is the seats Mr. Stagg digs up for his old pals, I suppose he leads strangers twenty or thirty miles out in the country and blindfolds 'em and ties 'em to a tree."

Now of course it was the bunk about he and Stagg bein' so close. He may of been introduced to him once, but he ain't the kind of a guy that Stagg would go around holdin' hands with. Just the same, most of the people he bragged about knowin', why it turned out that he really did know 'em; yes, and stood ace high with 'em, too.

Like, for instance, I got pinched for speedin' one night and they give me a ticket to show up in the Speeders' court and I told Stevens about it and he says, "Just forget it! I'll call up the judge and have it wiped off the book. He's a mighty good fella and a personal friend of mine."

Well, I didn't want to take no chances so I phoned Stevens the day before I was supposed to appear in court, and I asked him if he'd talked to the judge. He said he had and I

asked him if he was sure. So he said, "If you don't believe me, call up the judge yourself." And he give me the judge's number. Sure enough, Stevens had fixed it and when I thanked the judge for his trouble, he said it was a pleasure to do somethin' for a friend of Tom Stevens's.

Now, I know it's silly to not appreciate favors like that and not warm up to people that's always tryin' to help you along, but still a person don't relish bein' treated like they was half-witted and couldn't button their shirt alone. Tom and Belle meant all right, but I and Ada got kind of tired of havin' fault found with everything that belonged to us and everything we done or tried to do.

Besides our apartment bein' no good and our clothes terrible, we learned that my dentist didn't know a bridge from a mustache cup, and the cigarettes I smoked didn't have no taste to them, and the man that bobbed Ada's hair must of been mad at her, and neither of us would ever know what it was to live till we owned a wire-haired fox terrier.

And we found out that the liquor I'd been

drinkin' and enjoyin' was a mixture of bath salts and assorted paints, and the car we'd paid seventeen hundred smackers for wasn't nowheres near as much of a car as one that Tom could of got for us for eight hundred on account of knowin' a brother-in-law of a fella that used to go to school with the president of the company's nephew, and that if Ada would take up aesthetic dancin' under a dame Belle knew about, why she'd never have no more trouble with her tonsils.

Nothin' we had or nothin' we talked about gettin' or doin' was worth a damn unless it was recommended or suggested by the Stevenses.

Well, I done a pretty good business this fall and I and Ada had always planned to spend a winter in the South, so one night we figured it out that this was the year we could spare the money and the time and if we didn't go this year we never would. So the next thing was where should we go, and we finally decided on Miami. And we said we wouldn't mention nothin' about it to Tom and Belle till the day we was goin'. We'd pretend we was doin' it out of a clear sky.

But a secret is just as safe with Ada as a police dog tethered with dental floss. It wasn't more than a day or two after we'd had our talk when Tom and Belle sprang the news that they was leavin' for California right after New Year's. And why didn't we go with them.

Well, I didn't say nothin' and Ada said it sounded grand, but it was impossible. Then Stevens said if it was a question of money, to not let that bother us as he would loan it to me and I could pay it back whenever I felt like it. That was more than Ada could stand, so she says we wasn't as poor as people seemed to think and the reason we couldn't go to California was because we was goin' to Miami.

This was such a surprise that it almost struck 'em dumb at first and all Tom could think of to say was that he'd been to Miami himself and it was too crowded and he'd lay off of it if he was us. But the next time we seen 'em they had our trip all arranged.

First, Tom asked me what road we was goin' on and I told him the Big Four. So he asked if we had our reservations and I told him yes.

"Well," he said, "We'll get rid of 'em and

I'll fix you up on the C. & E. I. The general passenger agent is a friend of mine and they ain't nothin' he won't do for my friends. He'll see that you're treated right and that you get there in good shape."

So I said:

"I don't want to put you to all that trouble, and besides I don't know nobody connected with the Big Four well enough for them to resent me travelin' on their lines, and as for gettin' there in good shape, even if I have a secret enemy or two on the Big Four, I don't believe they'd endanger the lives of the other passengers just to see that I didn't get there in good shape."

But Stevens insisted on takin' my tickets and sellin' em back to the Big Four and gettin' me fixed on the C. & E. I. The berths we'd had on the Big Four was Lower 9 and Lower 10. The berths Tom got us on the C. & E. I. was Lower 7 and Lower 8, which he said was better. I suppose he figured that the nearer you are to the middle of the car, the less chance there is of bein' woke up if your car gets in another train's way.

He wanted to know, too, if I'd made any reservations at a hotel. I showed him a wire I had from the Royal Palm in reply to a wire I'd sent 'em.

"Yes," he says, "but you don't want to stop at the Royal Palm. You wire and tell 'em to cancel that and I'll make arrangements for you at the Flamingo, over at the Beach. Charley Krom, the manager there, was born and raised in the same town I was. He'll take great care of you if he knows you're a friend of mine."

So I asked him if all the guests at the Flamingo was friends of his, and he said of course not; what did I mean?

"Well," I said, "I was just thinkin' that if they ain't, Mr. Krom probably makes life pretty miserable for 'em. What does he do, have the phone girl ring 'em up at all hours of the night, and hide their mail, and shut off their hot water, and put cracker crumbs in their beds?"

That didn't mean nothin' to Stevens and he went right ahead and switched me from one hotel to the other.

While Tom was reorganizin' my program and tellin' me what to eat in Florida, and what bait to use for barracuda and carp, and what time to go bathin' and which foot to stick in the water first, why Belle was makin' Ada return all the stuff she had boughten to wear down there and buy other stuff that Belle picked out for her at joints where Belle was so well known that they only soaked her twice as much as a stranger. She had Ada almost crazy, but I told her to never mind; in just a few more days we'd be where they couldn't get at us.

I suppose you're wonderin' why didn't we quarrel with 'em and break loose from 'em and tell 'em to leave us alone. You'd know why if you knew them. Nothin' we could do would convince 'em that we didn't want their advice and help. And nothin' we could say was a insult.

Well, the night before we was due to leave Chi, the phone rung and I answered it. It was Tom.

"I've got a surprise for you," he says. "I and Belle has give up the California idear.

We're goin' to Miami instead, and on account of me knowin' the boys down at the C. & E. I., I've landed a drawin' room on the same train you're takin'. How is that for news?"

"Great!" I said, and I went back and broke it to Ada. For a minute I thought she was goin' to faint. And all night long she moaned and groaned and had hysterics.

So that's how we happened to come to Biloxi.

WHO DEALT?

IX

WHO DEALT?

You know, this is the first time Tom and I have been with real friends since we were married. I suppose you'll think it's funny for me to call you *my* friends when we've never met before, but Tom has talked about you so much and how much he thought of you and how crazy he was to see you and everything—well, it's just as if I'd known you all my life, like he has.

We've got our little crowd out there, play bridge and dance with them; but of course we've only been there three months, at least I have, and people you've known that length of time, well, it isn't like knowing people all your life, like you and Tom. How often I've heard Tom say he'd give any amount of money to be with Arthur and Helen, and how bored he was out there with just poor little me and his new friends!

Arthur and Helen, Arthur and Helen—he

talks about you so much that it's a wonder I'm not jealous; especially of you, Helen. You must have been his real pal when you were kids.

Nearly all of his kid books, they have your name in front—to Thomas Cannon from Helen Bird Strong. This is a wonderful treat for him to see you! And a treat for me, too. Just think, I've at last met the wonderful Helen and Arthur! You must forgive me calling you by your first names; that's how I always think of you and I simply can't say Mr. and Mrs. Gratz.

No, thank you, Arthur; no more. Two is my limit and I've already exceeded it, with two cocktails before dinner and now this. But it's a special occasion, meeting Tom's best friends. I bet Tom wishes he could celebrate too, don't you, dear? Of course he could if he wanted to, but when he once makes up his mind to a thing, there's nothing in the world can shake him. He's got the strongest will power of any person I ever saw.

I do think it's wonderful, him staying on the wagon this long, a man that used to—well,

you know as well as I do; probably a whole lot better, because you were with him so much in the old days, and all I know is just what he's told me. He told me about once in Pittsburgh—— All right, Tommie; I won't say another word. But it's all over now, thank heavens! Not a drop since we've been married; three whole months! And he says it's forever, don't you, dear? Though I don't mind a person drinking if they do it in moderation. But you know Tom! He goes the limit in everything he does. Like he used to in athletics——

All right, dear; I won't make you blush. I know how you hate the limelight. It's terrible, though, not to be able to boast about your own husband; everything he does or ever has done seems so wonderful. But is that only because we've been married such a short time? Do you feel the same way about Arthur, Helen? You do? And you married him four years ago, isn't that right? And you eloped, didn't you? You see I know all about you.

Oh, are you waiting for me? Do we cut for partners? Why can't we play families? I

don't feel so bad if I do something dumb when it's Tom I'm playing with. He never scolds, though he does give me some terrible looks. But not very often lately; I don't make the silly mistakes I used to. I'm pretty good now, aren't I, Tom? You better say so, because if I'm not, it's your fault. You know Tom had to teach me the game. I never played at all till we were engaged. Imagine! And I guess I was pretty awful at first, but Tom was a dear, so patient! I know he thought I never would learn, but I fooled you, didn't I, Tommie?

No, indeed, I'd rather play than do almost anything. But you'll sing for us, won't you, Helen? I mean after a while. Tom has raved to me about your voice and I'm dying to hear it.

What are we playing for? Yes, a penny's perfectly all right. Out there we generally play for half a cent a piece, a penny a family. But a penny apiece is all right. I guess we can afford it now, can't we, dear? Tom hasn't told you about his raise. He was—— All right, Tommie; I'll shut up. I know you hate to be talked about, but your wife can't help

being just a teeny bit proud of you. And I think your best friends are interested in your affairs, aren't you, folks?

But Tom is the most secretive person I ever knew. I believe he even keeps things from me! Not very many, though. I can usually tell when he's hiding something and I keep after him till he confesses. He often says I should have been a lawyer or a detective, the way I can worm things out of people. Don't you, Tom?

For instance, I never would have known about his experience with those horrid football people at Yale if I hadn't just made him tell me. Didn't you know about that? No, Tom, I'm going to tell Arthur even if you hate me for it. I know you'd be interested, Arthur, not only because you're Tom's friend, but on account of you being such a famous athlete yourself. Let me see, how was it, Tom? You must help me out. Well, if I don't get it right, you correct me.

Well, Tom's friends at Yale had heard what a wonderful football player he was in high school so they made him try for a place on the

Yale nine. Tom had always played half-back. You have to be a fast runner to be a half-back and Tom could run awfully fast. He can yet. When we were engaged we used to run races and the prize was—— All right, Tommie, I won't give away our secrets. Anyway, he can beat me to pieces.

Well, he wanted to play half-back at Yale and he was getting along fine and the other men on the team said he would be a wonder and then one day they were having their practice and Tex Jones, no, Ted Jones—he's the main coach—he scolded Tom for having the signal wrong and Tom proved that Jones was wrong and he was right and Jones never forgave him. He made Tom quit playing half-back and put him tackle or end or some place like that where you can't do anything and being a fast runner doesn't count. So Tom saw that Jones had it in for him and he quit. Wasn't that it, Tom? Well, anyway, it was something.

Oh, are you waiting for me? I'm sorry, What did you bid, Helen? And you, Tom? You doubled her? And Arthur passed? Well,

let's see. I wish I could remember what that means. I know that sometimes when he doubles he means one thing and sometimes another. But I always forget which is which. Let me see; it was two spades that he doubled, wasn't it? That means I'm to leave him in, I'm pretty sure. Well, I'll pass. Oh, I'm sorry, Tommie! I knew I'd get it wrong. Please forgive me. But maybe we'll set them anyway. Whose lead?

I'll stop talking now and try and keep my mind on the game. You needn't look that way, Tommie. I *can* stop talking if I try. It's kind of hard to concentrate though, when you're, well, excited. It's not only meeting you people, but I always get excited traveling. I was just terrible on our honeymoon, but then I guess a honeymoon's enough to make anybody nervous. I'll never forget when we went into the hotel in Chicago—— All right, Tommie, I won't. But I can tell about meeting the Bakers.

They're a couple about our age that I've known all my life. They were the last people in the world I wanted to see, but we ran into

them on State Street and they insisted on us coming to their hotel for dinner and before dinner they took us up to their room and Ken —that's Mr. Baker—Ken made some cocktails, though I didn't want any and Tom was on the wagon. He said a honeymoon was a fine time to be on the wagon! Ken said.

"Don't tempt him, Ken," I said. "Tom isn't a drinker like you and Gertie and the rest of us. When he starts, he can't stop." Gertie is Mrs. Baker.

So Ken said why should he stop and I said there was good reason why he should because he had promised me he would and he told me the day we were married that if I ever saw him take another drink I would know that——

What did you make? Two odd? Well, thank heavens that isn't a game! Oh, that does make a game, doesn't it? Because Tom doubled and I left him in. Isn't that wicked! Oh, dearie, please forgive me and I'll promise to pay attention from now on! What do I do with these? Oh, yes, I make them for Arthur.

I was telling you about the Bakers. Finally Ken saw he couldn't make Tom take a drink,

so he gave up in disgust. But imagine meeting them on our honeymoon, when we didn't want to see anybody! I don't suppose anybody does unless they're already tired of each other, and we certainly weren't, were we, Tommie? And aren't yet, are we, dear? And never will be. But I guess I better speak for myself.

There! I'm talking again! But you see it's the first time we've been with anybody we really cared about; I mean, you're Tom's best friends and it's so nice to get a chance to talk to somebody who's known him a long time. Out there the people we run around with are almost strangers and they don't talk about anything but themselves and how much money their husbands make. You never can talk to them about things that are worth while, like books. I'm wild about books, but I honestly don't believe half the women we know out there can read. Or at least they don't. If you mention some really worth while novel like, say, "Black Oxen," they think you're trying to put on the Ritz.

You said a no-trump, didn't you, Tom?

And Arthur passed. Let me see; I wish I knew what to do. I haven't any five-card—it's terrible! Just a minute. I wish somebody could—I know I ought to take—but—well, I'll pass. Oh, Tom, this is the worst you ever saw, but I don't know what I could have done.

I do hold the most terrible cards! I certainly believe in the saying, "Unlucky at cards, lucky in love." Whoever made it up must have been thinking of me. I hate to lay them down, dear. I know you'll say I ought to have done something. Well, there they are! Let's see your hand, Helen. Oh, Tom, she's—but I mustn't tell, must I? Anyway, I'm dummy. That's one comfort. I can't make a mistake when I'm dummy. I believe Tom overbids lots of times so I'll be dummy and can't do anything ridiculous. But at that I'm much better than I used to be, aren't I, dear?

Helen, do you mind telling me where you got that gown? Crandall and Nelsons's? I've heard of them, but I heard they were terribly expensive. Of course a person can't expect to get a gown like that without paying for it. I've got to get some things while I'm

here and I suppose that's where I better go, if their things aren't too horribly dear. I haven't had a thing new since I was married and I've worn this so much I'm sick of it.

Tom's always after me to buy clothes, but I can't seem to get used to spending somebody else's money, though it was dad's money I spent before I did Tom's, but that's different, don't you think so? And of course at first we didn't have very much to spend, did we, dear? But now that we've had our raise—— All right, Tommie, I won't say another word.

Oh, did you know they tried to get Tom to run for mayor? Tom is making faces at me to shut up, but I don't see any harm in telling it to his best friends. They know we're not the kind that brag, Tommie. I do think it was quite a tribute; he'd only lived there a little over a year. It came up one night when the Guthries were at our house, playing bridge. Mr. Guthrie—that's A. L. Guthrie—he's one of the big lumbermen out there. He owns—just what does he own, Tom? Oh, I'm sorry. Anyway, he's got millions. Well, at least thousands.

He and his wife were at our house playing bridge. She's the queerest woman! If you just saw her, you'd think she was a janitor or something; she wears the most hideous clothes. Why, that night she had on a—honestly you'd have sworn it was a maternity gown, and for no reason. And the first time I met her—well, I just can't describe it. And she's a graduate of Bryn Mawr and one of the oldest families in Philadelphia. You'd never believe it!

She and her husband are terribly funny in a bridge game. He doesn't think there ought to be any conventions; he says a person might just as well tell each other what they've got. So he won't pay any attention to what-do-you-call-'em, informatory, doubles and so forth. And she plays all the conventions, so you can imagine how they get along. Fight! Not really fight, you know, but argue. That is, he does. It's horribly embarrassing to whoever is playing with them. Honestly, if Tom ever spoke to me like Mr. Guthrie does to his wife, well—aren't they terrible, Tom? Oh, I'm sorry!

She was the first woman in Portland that

called on me and I thought it was awfully nice of her, though when I saw her at the door I would have sworn she was a book agent or maybe a cook looking for work. She had on a —well, I can't describe it. But it was sweet of her to call, she being one of the real people there and me—well, that was before Tom was made a vice-president. What? Oh, I never dreamed he hadn't written you about that!

But Mrs. Guthrie acted just like it was a great honor for her to meet me, and I like people to act that way even when I know it's all apple sauce. Isn't that a funny expression, "apple sauce"? Some man said it in a vaudeville show in Portland the Monday night before we left. He was a comedian—Jack Brooks or Ned Frawley or something. It means—well, I don't know how to describe it. But we had a terrible time after the first few minutes. She is the silentest person I ever knew and I'm kind of bashful myself with strangers. What are you grinning about, Tommie? I am, too, bashful when I don't know people. Not exactly bashful, maybe, but, well, bashful.

It was one of the most embarrassing things

I ever went through. Neither of us could say a word and I could hardly help from laughing at what she had on. But after you get to know her you don't mind her clothes, though it's a terrible temptation all the time not to tell her how much nicer—— And her hair! But she plays a dandy game of bridge, lots better than her husband. You know he won't play conventions. He says it's just like telling you what's in each other's hand. And they have awful arguments in a game. That is, he does. She's nice and quiet and it's a kind of mystery how they ever fell in love. Though there's a saying or a proverb or something, isn't there, about like not liking like? Or is it just the other way?

But I was going to tell you about them wanting Tom to be mayor. Oh, Tom, only two down? Why, I think you did splendidly! I gave you a miserable hand and Helen had—what didn't you have, Helen? You had the ace, king of clubs. No, Tom had the king. No, Tom had the queen. Or was it spades? And you had the ace of hearts. No, Tom had that. No, he didn't. What *did* you have,

Tom? I don't exactly see what you bid on. Of course I was terrible, but—what's the difference anyway?

What was I saying? Oh, yes, about Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie. It's funny for a couple like that to get married when they are so different in every way. I never saw two people with such different tastes. For instance, Mr. Guthrie is keen about motoring and Mrs. Guthrie just hates it. She simply suffers all the time she's in a car. He likes a good time, dancing, golfing, fishing, shows, things like that. She isn't interested in anything but church work and bridge work.

"Bridge work." I meant bridge, not bridge work. That's funny, isn't it? And yet they get along awfully well; that is when they're not playing cards or doing something else together. But it does seem queer that they picked each other out. Still, I guess hardly any husband and wife agree on anything.

You take Tom and me, though, and you'd think we were made for each other. It seems like we feel just the same about everything. That is, almost everything. The things we

don't agree on are little things that don't matter. Like music. Tom is wild about jazz and blues and dance music. He adores Irving Berlin and Gershwin and Jack Kearns. He's always after those kind of things on the radio and I just want serious, classical things like "Humoresque" and "Indian Love Lyrics." And then there's shows. Tom is crazy over Ed Wynn and I can't see anything in him. Just the way he laughs at his own jokes is enough to spoil him for me. If I'm going to spend time and money on a theater I want to see something worth while—"The Fool" or "Lightnin'."

And things to eat. Tom insists, or that is he did insist, on a great big breakfast—fruit, cereal, eggs, toast, and coffee. All I want is a little fruit and dry toast and coffee. I think it's a great deal better for a person. So that's one habit I broke Tom of, was big breakfasts. And another thing he did when we were first married was to take off his shoes as soon as he got home from the office and put on bedroom slippers. I believe a person ought not to get sloppy just because they're married.

But the worst of all was pajamas! What's the difference, Tommie? Helen and Arthur don't mind. And I think it's kind of funny, you being so old-fashioned. I mean Tom had always worn a nightgown till I made him give it up. And it was a struggle, believe me! I had to threaten to leave him if he didn't buy pajamas. He certainly hated it. And now he's mad at me for telling, aren't you, Tommie? I just couldn't help it. I think it's so funny in this day and age. I hope Arthur doesn't wear them; nightgowns, I mean. You don't, do you, Arthur? I knew you didn't.

Oh, are you waiting for me? What did you say, Arthur? Two diamonds? Let's see what that means. When Tom makes an original bid of two it means he hasn't got the tops. I wonder—but of course you couldn't have the —heavens! What am I saying! I guess I better just keep still and pass.

But what was I going to tell you? Something about—oh, did I tell you about Tom being an author? I had no idea he was talented that way till after we were married and I was unpacking his old papers and things and

came across a poem he'd written, the saddest, mushiest poem! Of course it was a long time ago he wrote it; it was dated four years ago, long before he met me, so it didn't make me very jealous, though it was about some other girl. You didn't know I found it, did you, Tommie?

But that wasn't what I refer to. He's written a story, too, and he's sent it to four different magazines and they all sent it back. I tell him though, that that doesn't mean anything. When you see some of the things the magazines do print, why, it's an honor to have them *not* like yours. The only thing is that Tom worked so hard over it and sat up nights writing and rewriting, it's a kind of a disappointment to have them turn it down.

It's a story about two men and a girl and they were all brought up together and one of the men was awfully popular and well off and good-looking and a great athlete—a man like Arthur. There, Arthur! How is that for a T. L.? The other man was just an ordinary man with not much money, but the girl seemed to like him better and she promised to

wait for him. Then this man worked hard and got money enough to see him through Yale.

The other man, the well-off one, went to Princeton and made a big hit as an athlete and everything and he was through college long before his friend because his friend had to earn the money first. And the well-off man kept after the girl to marry him. He didn't know she had promised the other one. Anyway she got tired waiting for the man she was engaged to and eloped with the other one. And the story ends up by the man she threw down welcoming the couple when they came home and pretending everything was all right, though his heart was broken.

What are you blushing about, Tommie? It's nothing to be ashamed of. I thought it was very well written and if the editors had any sense they'd have taken it.

Still, I don't believe the real editors see half the stories that are sent to them. In fact I know they don't. You've either got to have a name or a pull to get your things published. Or else pay the magazines to publish them. Of course if you are Robert Chambers or

Irving R. Cobb, they will print whatever you write whether it's good or bad. But you haven't got a chance if you are an unknown like Tom. They just keep your story long enough so you will think they are considering it and then they send it back with a form letter saying it's not available for their magazine and they don't even tell why.

You remember, Tom, that Mr. Hastings we met at the Hammonds'. He's a writer and knows all about it. He was telling me of an experience he had with one of the magazines; I forget which one, but it was one of the big ones. He wrote a story and sent it to them and they sent it back and said they couldn't use it.

Well, some time after that Mr. Hastings was in a hotel in Chicago and a bell-boy went around the lobby paging Mr.—— I forget the name, but it was the name of the editor of this magazine that had sent back the story, Runkle, or Byers, or some such name. So the man, whatever his name was, he was really there and answered the page and afterwards Mr. Hastings went up to him and introduced him-

self and told the man about sending a story to his magazine and the man said he didn't remember anything about it. And he was the editor! Of course he'd never seen it. No wonder Tom's story keeps coming back!

He says he is through sending it and just the other day he was going to tear it up, but I made him keep it because we may meet somebody some time who knows the inside ropes and can get a hearing with some big editor. I'm sure it's just a question of pull. Some of the things that get into the magazines sound like they had been written by the editor's friends or relatives or somebody whom they didn't want to hurt their feelings. And Tom really can write!

I wish I could remember that poem of his I found. I memorized it once, but—wait! I believe I can still say it! Hush, Tommie! What hurt will it do anybody? Let me see; it goes:

"I thought the sweetness of her song
Would ever, ever more belong
To me; I thought (O thought divine!)
My bird was really mine!

"But promises are made, it seems,
Just to be broken. All my dreams
Fade out and leave me crushed, alone.
My bird, alas, has flown!"

Isn't that pretty. He wrote it four years ago. Why, Helen, you revoked! And, Tom, do you know that's Scotch you're drinking? You said—— *Why, Tom!*